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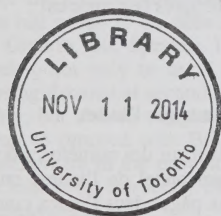
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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 5 November 2014

Mercredi 5 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2014, on the amendment to the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to join this debate today, not on Bill 10 but on a closure motion to stop this assembly from debating an issue that will affect 140,000 child care spaces, affect parents across this province and affect children throughout Ontario.

This bill needs to be debated, and it needs to travel across Ontario. So, Speaker, I am standing here before you today, not only to say I oppose stopping this bill from being debated at second reading on the floor of this assembly, but also to suggest to my colleagues that the best way to proceed with Bill 10, the best way to talk about child care in the province of Ontario and the best way to talk about the safety of our children, is to ensure that we travel this bill.

Mothers and fathers like me don't have the opportunity to come to speak on the floor of the assembly every day, Speaker. They are working. They are spending time in their community, whether that is in Barrie, in Oakville, in Kingston or in Sudbury. They do not have the opportunity to come to the floor of the assembly. So, on their behalf, as a fellow mother, as someone who also has her child in daycare with a person who is important to my family, I want to speak on their behalf.

I have, for some time, been very critical of this Liberal government's plan to abolish 140,000 child care spaces

in the province. I understand that the NDP has put forward an amendment in order to allow this bill to travel. For that, Speaker, I'd like to read into the record a petition that 2,000 people signed in less than one week as a result of this Liberal Bill 10. It says:

"Whereas the Liberal government introduced Bill 10—Child Care Modernization Act on July 10, 2014;

"Whereas the passage of the bill will result in the elimination of 140,000 child care spaces in Ontario and increase child care costs by 30-40%, especially in rural and suburban areas;

"Whereas Bill 10 could force licensed daycare providers to close, impacting religious day schools, private schools and Montessori schools as well;

"Whereas the Liberal government has asked for quick passage of the bill but has not properly considered these repercussions for all Ontario parents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government conduct province-wide consultation during the 2014-2015 legislative winter recess at which time the Minister of Education" and the committee on social policy "will travel across the province to Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor, Sudbury and Toronto to consult with parents and child care workers to understand how the bill will negatively affect Ontario children, parents and child care workers."

So I speak on behalf of thousands of parents across this province, their children and, of course, those independent child care operators, licensed and unlicensed, who are afraid that this bill will negatively impact our children. Therefore, with respect to the amendment that I am now debating, put forward by the third party, I move that the amendment to the motion be amended by deleting the number "5" and replacing it with the number "7," and deleting "as determined by the committee" and replacing it with "in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton moves that the amendment to the motion be amended by deleting the number "5" and replacing it with the number "7," and deleting "as determined by the committee" and replacing it with "in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury."

I refer back to the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I believe the subamendment needs to be very specific, and I'll tell you why—I alluded to this in the very early

points of my initial speech to this assembly. I know that other moms and dads in their 30s and 40s are out today working. They're trying to make a living in order for them to pay for their child care. These parents have made a conscious decision, a responsible decision to place their children in care. They are not able to come to Queen's Park and speak for 10 minutes to a committee at this building here in Toronto. If we are truly engaged with the public, if we are truly committed to engaging our citizenry, we don't always have to do it in a committee room at this assembly. We should travel this bill; we should travel to talk to those who are affected most by this legislation.

When I first spoke about Bill 10, I talked about the fact that there are two things this government is opposed to: the first is parental choice, and the second is parental responsibility. These are both affected by this legislation, these are both affected by this government, and they should both be heard by a committee of this assembly in each of those communities, whether that is in Hamilton, in Guelph, in my city of Ottawa, in Kitchener, in London, in Windsor or in Sudbury.

The independent child care operators, whether they are licensed or not, should also have an opportunity to speak to this legislation. But as you are aware, Speaker, many of them across this great, vast province, the largest province geographically in Canada, the largest province population-wise in Canada—it is impossible, if you're going to affect 140,000 child care spaces, to bring everyone here who will be affected. The best way to get a proper hearing is to travel this bill to Mr. Speaker's Hamilton, to my Ottawa, to Windsor, to Kitchener, to London, to Sudbury—to places where this bill will affect people. That is why we put forward the amendment, and that is why I put forward that petition, which over 2,000 people in one week signed.

0910

Let me read you a letter from a mother in Brampton:

"I am asking you as a mother, ICP, and voter to travel Bill 10. It is not perfect—yet—but there is hope for a suitable and obtainable goal to be able to be met with the bill. Do accomplish this; the proposed Bill 10 must be travelled. Passing with 35 of the recommendations met is not good enough for Ontario....

"Yours in caring,

"Gerri Ellery

"Gerri's Home Daycare," a registered home business in Brampton.

Let me speak to you now from Sophie Renaud, a very upset Sudbury citizen. In a letter to Minister Sandals, she said:

"I'm writing to you as a parent that has her child in a home daycare. I urged you not to pass Bill 10. If my current daycare has no choice but to switch to a licensed daycare, she will have to charge their rates as well. That means I can't afford to put her in daycare and I'm forced to quit my job to take care of my child."

I think Sophie Renaud speaks for thousands of mothers across Ontario who will be negatively impacted by this

legislation. I believe that the member from Sudbury and this government owe it to Sophie to go to Sudbury to hear from her and to hear from those who are affected by this bill, just like her.

I want to talk about Emily Allison. She's from Bowmanville. Up until recently, she had a very strong advocate for her standing on this side of the House in John O'Toole. Having known John O'Toole and served with him, I know that Mr. O'Toole would be defending her today. Emily Allison writes this:

"I am an independent child care provider in Durham region, and the Durham region spokesperson for CICPO (Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario).

"Bill 10 proposes to include my four-year-old son in my ratio even though he is in school for seven of my nine open hours. This means that I will have to let go of a family who has been in my care for 2.5 years in order to remain a family legal independent daycare."

She says, at the very end—and I say this to the member from Durham: "I ask that you travel this bill during the winter break so that you can truly understand the ramifications on Ontario's families, children and providers."

These are messages for members in Liberal ridings. They are constituents who feel that if this bill does not travel across the province to speak to those who are impacted most—that is, mothers and fathers who are working during the day and child care operators who are caring for their children during the day—then this bill will not be worth the paper it is written on, because it will have been done without the consent of the people who sent them to Queen's Park.

I have another letter here from Joanne Hoole. Joanne is from Oakville, another Liberal riding. She says: "My name is Joanne Hoole, and I am a home daycare provider in Oakville for 25 years. I've been married for 26 years and have two children, a daughter who is 21 and a son who is 18.

"I have a current police check as does my husband, my daughter and my son. I also have my CPR, which I renew every year."

Speaker, listen to this line: "I have had the privilege of helping parents raise over 50 children, and still have contact with most" of them.

This woman, Joanne Hoole, feels a great deal of pride in the job she has done for over 25 years. The families she has been in contact with over that period of time are still her family. She has helped raise 50 children, above and beyond the children that she has birthed herself.

If the member from Oakville and the member from Durham and the member from Sudbury and the members from Brampton and the members from Guelph and the members from Ottawa, with the exception of me, won't stand up for their constituents, I want to assure them I will, and the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus will, and our education critic, Garfield Dunlop, will stand up for you.

That is why we are calling for province-wide hearings in the following cities: We want to go to Hamilton; we

want to go to Guelph; we want to go to Ottawa; we want to be in Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury, in addition to the city of Toronto, because the people who are affected most by this legislation, the people who will be hurt by the 140,000 child care spaces that will be slashed from this province—those are the people who are mostly affected, those are the people we want to hear from and those are the people who the Liberals want to shut out of this process. Not only do they want to shut them out of the process by time allocating this bill so we can't talk about Bill 10, but they also want to ensure that the people who are affected most in suburban and rural Ontario, who are outside of the downtown core here in Toronto, are shut out of the debate. I think that is wrong, and that is why I'm proud to stand up for them.

I have another person here, Jillian Henderson, who has been quite active. She wrote to me as well. She also wrote to the Premier and to the education minister. She says this, and this is, I think, a well-known and established fact now: "Currently Bill 10 will limit spaces, raise fees and provide no incentives for providers to license through existing for-profit agencies. There is no increased accountability, no registry ... this bill is a knee-jerk reaction to a lawsuit against the province...."

"Please allow Bill 10 to travel the province.... That is what democracy is and what our children deserve."

I couldn't agree more with Jillian; I think Jillian has it right. Jillian is speaking up on behalf of those who are child care providers, as well as those who have children.

The final letter I want to read into the record before I talk about a meeting I had on Friday is from Megan Pare. Megan is from Lively, Ontario. She says, "If Bill 10 passes, I will be forced to terminate care to four of my seven part-time and full-time children. Two of those children are twins! Now tell me, where will these 12-month-old twin boys go?" That's going to be a challenge now for this child care operator, but also for the parents of these twins.

I can tell you, Speaker, it wasn't so long ago when my husband and I had to set out to find child care for our daughter, Victoria. Most people in this assembly will remember I arrived at Queen's Park with a brand-spanking-new baby. She was a sweet little baby and she is a sweet little girl now. We chose our child care. We chose it as parents. We believed we had the responsibility to find adequate care and quality care for our child. We also believed it was our responsibility to ensure she was safe. But we had the choice. What is happening with Bill 10 is that choice is being ripped away from parents choosing the care they want for their child. They are taking away responsibility and they are taking away choice, all because the Ombudsman found that the Ministry of Education wasn't enforcing its own rules. He said—not us in the opposition, the Ombudsman—that the government didn't do its job.

I had the opportunity to meet with the Ombudsman on Friday and we had a long-ranging discussion about a number of pieces of legislation and a number of issues, ranging from hydro to government accountability. I took

the opportunity to talk to him about Bill 10. I talked to him about some of the allegations being made from the members opposite in the Liberal caucus and some of the suggestions that the Minister of Education was making about unlicensed child care being illegal, which he has never said. But what he has said—and he has never, by the way, said that we should eliminate unlicensed child care in the province of Ontario; I want that written into the record. I want the Minister of Education to acknowledge that, because he never once ever uttered the words that we should eliminate unlicensed child care. That is what the minister wants to say. The minister wants to eliminate these 140,000 child care spaces. Why? Because they want to bring universal daycare in the back door, similar to what Paul Martin did back in the early 2000s, which was adamantly rejected not only by Ontarians but by all Canadians.

Speaker, I propose that you allow this bill to travel; that the Minister of Education listen to the stakeholders; that we come back to this assembly in the spring session and we talk about what will work, not what won't work, and we protect those 140,000 child care spaces.

In my final few minutes, I'd like to acknowledge the opposition House leader, Mr. Steve Clark from Leeds-Grenville, for the work he has done in order to try to make this bill travel; as well as the strong work by our education critic, Garfield Dunlop, who has never once let up for one moment. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's always an honour to be able to stand in this House, but sometimes it's more difficult to do so than others. I think this is one of the more difficult ones.

0920

I'd like to first put this in context. Now we're discussing four things: We're discussing the bill on child care; we're discussing an amendment; we're discussing a sub-amendment; and we should be thinking about the reasons behind this bill and behind this time allocation motion. The root cause of this is an antiquated system which contributed to a tragic loss of life; that's the root cause of this. The government responded by putting forward a bill; our member from Hamilton Mountain responded by asking the Ombudsman to look into our child care system. The Ombudsman came out with a report this October which was very damning to the government.

The government responds with this bill, and responds by saying, "We have to do this right away"—right away; push, push, push. But in the House, when questioned by our member from Hamilton Mountain, the Minister of Education said that a lot of the issues brought forward in the Ombudsman's report have already been dealt with. So the argument that this bill has to be finished as soon as possible is somewhat doubtful.

The government responds by putting a time allocation motion forward, once again saying that the opposition parties are trying to stall this legislation. I can certainly say, as far as the New Democratic caucus, we are not try-

ing to stall this legislation at all. We are trying to do our part to make sure it's done right. That's the job of this Legislature: to do as good a job as possible to make this legislation as effective as possible. Once again, we are not dealing with widgets or traffic signs; we are dealing with our children. It's a bit of double-speak to say that we have to move right now because the system is so antiquated when we've had the same government in place for more than a decade. All of sudden, for the rush to be on—so that's the background.

We have a time allocation motion and, basically, that's limiting the members' ability to speak to this bill. Although we don't agree, we don't think that that's the main issue here. We're also limiting the public's ability to speak to this bill. With the hearings being held in Toronto, and with two days of hearings: We're in favour of that. Certainly there's a large population base here in Toronto and they have child care issues, obviously. Do we feel that hearings should be held in Toronto? Of course. Mr. Bradley, when he spoke to this motion—I'd like to quote from the Hansard: "This motion allows for two days of public hearings that go into the evening—now that's something a little different; go right into the evening—so that all who have an interest in this important piece of legislation can appear before the committee." That's where there's a problem, because "all who have an interest" do not have the ability to appear before this committee.

I've often heard the Premier say that she's the Premier of all Ontario; she believes in one Ontario. We agree, but one Ontario is much bigger than having a committee meeting in one spot, specifically in Queen's Park, especially in a case like this because, yes, stakeholder groups are equipped to travel, but what this committee should really hear are the different experiences from people who actually experience the child care system in the various parts of Ontario.

I've often spoken in this House about other legislation that looks excellent on paper but doesn't work on the ground. We can't afford to do this.

Yesterday, in the late show—I happened to stay for part of the late show, and the response from the member from—I know Mr. Crack's name. I don't know his—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. John Vanthof: —Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He said that this was groundbreaking legislation and it was a monumental shift. Well, if it's groundbreaking and monumental, we should take the time to listen to people to make sure it's done right. That's the issue.

At no time does our caucus believe that we should stall this for political purposes. We're not trying to do that. We are trying to get as many voices as possible, constructive voices from across the province, to have input in this bill and to be able to relay their experiences. That is the crucial part of this. That's why we proposed the amendment that this bill be travelled.

I believe that's why the Tories—I'm not partial to their inner workings, but I believe that's what they're proposing with this subamendment. Our issue with the subamendment: We believe that it should be the com-

mittee that decides where they go as opposed to us, but that is neither here nor there.

But it is important—it's crucial—that this bill hear as many voices from as many parents, from as many child care providers, licensed and unlicensed, as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Further debate? Last call.

There being no further debate, I will call the question on the amendment to the motion.

Ms. MacLeod has moved that the amendment to the motion be amended by deleting the number "5" and replacing it with the number "7," and deleting "as determined by the committee" and replacing it with "in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This will be deferred until after question period.

Vote deferred.

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr. Hoskins moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Hoskins.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Halton.

Today I'd like to further discuss our government's Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, that would combine two previously introduced pieces of legislation that expired on the order paper in May. You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that I introduced Bill 21 on July 22.

This proposed legislation would combine our government's actions to prohibit compensation to blood and plasma donors in Ontario, and the regulation of hospital pharmacies and other actions to strengthen oversight and improve patient safety.

0930

Let me start with blood and plasma donation, and then I'll move to the regulation of our hospital pharmacies.

Every year, thousands of Ontarians voluntarily give blood and plasma to help others survive accidents, surgery or other life-threatening conditions. Voluntary donation is an important pillar of our province's, and indeed our country's, public blood system. This is a system that has been managed by Canadian Blood Services, a public, not-for-profit organization, for more than 15 years. Canadian Blood Services maintains a national, centralized system that has strong quality assurance and oversight measures, and, in fact, is recognized as one of the safest systems in the world. Our voluntary blood donation system ensures that blood and plasma collection in this province remains true to our common values.

Health Canada has received licence applications from at least one private, for-profit company that is seeking to open plasma collection sites in Ontario—a company that would pay people for their plasma, plasma being a component of blood. However, Health Canada has also left the decision to permit or prohibit payment for blood or plasma donations to each of the provinces and territories.

Since this matter first arose, we've heard from many, many health care organizations, advocacy groups and, indeed, individual Ontarians who are opposed to private, for-profit plasma collection. As a government, we agree, and we stand firmly against payment for blood or plasma donations in Ontario. That's why our government is taking steps to protect the integrity of our national and provincial blood donation system and to avoid the development of a parallel private collection system in this province.

I'm pleased to say that we've already made progress. As a first step, we amended two existing regulations under the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act to strengthen the licensing requirements for labs and specimen collection centres in Ontario, and specifically to prohibit payment to donors for their blood or their plasma. That includes reimbursement of expenses and other forms of compensation.

As a second step, I introduced this legislation, which includes a revised version of the previously introduced Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014. If enacted, this new statute would clearly and unequivocally prohibit paying people for blood and plasma donations in order to maintain the integrity of our public, volunteer blood-collection system in Ontario and in this nation.

It's important to note that Canadian Blood Services would be exempt from this prohibition so that, in the case of rare circumstances, they may pay blood and plasma donors if they ever deemed such a measure to be necessary. In fact, this exemption is in line with the commission of inquiry led by Justice Horace Krever, which recommended measures to ensure that donors of blood and plasma not be paid, except in rare circumstances.

Our revisions also make it clear that researchers would be exempt from the prohibition against paying for blood donations as long as the collected blood is being used exclusively for research purposes—for example, in clinical trials. The proposed legislation will also strengthen our regulatory enforcement tools so that we can take swift and decisive action when required in case of violations.

Speaker, I want you and the members to know that our government takes the supply of blood, plasma and plasma-based products for patients very, very seriously. We have full confidence in the ability of Canadian Blood Services to continue successfully managing Canada's blood and plasma supply.

This decision to prohibit payment for blood or plasma donations will in no way reduce the supply or availability of blood or blood products for Ontarians, but it will protect the integrity of our current voluntary blood donation system—quite frankly, a system that works. We are fortunate in Ontario to have a well-managed, centralized system with strong quality assurance and oversight measures in place. In fact, our blood donation system is now recognized as one of the safest in the world. So there's no identified need for a parallel system in this province or in this country.

The second part of the bill is our government's response to a very serious incident last year, when 1,019 patients in Ontario received weaker doses of chemotherapy drugs than had been prescribed by their oncologists. Our government committed to implementing the 12 recommendations made by Dr. Jake Thiessen, who was appointed to conduct an investigation to determine the cause of the underdosing and the appropriate response. One of those recommendations requires legislative changes, which this proposed legislation addresses. If passed, our proposed legislation would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act so that the Ontario College of Pharmacists can then inspect and license all hospital pharmacies in Ontario as a means to ensure that medication management and processing systems that are in place in hospital pharmacies are standardized.

At the same time, I'm introducing additional amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act that would enhance communications among health systems partners, including our health regulatory colleges, our public hospitals and others, in order to strengthen oversight and better protect patients.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I'd like to thank our valued partners for their support on all parts of this legislation, including the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine, Canadian Doctors for Medicare, the Canadian AIDS Society, the advocates for those affected by tainted blood, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association.

I'm very proud of our voluntary, life-saving blood donation system. I'm also proud of the care that health professionals in Ontario provide to patients every day. In fact, I encourage all Ontarians to donate blood if they are able to do so.

I have full confidence in Canada's national blood system, and I know that Canadian Blood Services has the ability to successfully manage the blood and blood products supply for Ontarians.

More importantly, we must not allow our cherished health care system and our voluntary blood donation system to be compromised in any way.

With this legislation, we will be able to act decisively to protect the integrity of our current blood donation system and our hospital pharmacy services. I am confidently optimistic that all the members of this Legislature will be able to stand behind this proposed legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to expand on the remarks made by Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, regarding our government's Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, which would prohibit payments to Ontarians for their blood and plasma and enhance the regulation of hospital pharmacies.

With this proposed legislation, our government is taking decisive action to maintain the integrity of the province's health care system. The proposed Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, is a combination of two time-sensitive bills that were previously introduced by the then Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Deb Matthews, but which died on the order paper in May 2014.

To start off, I'll discuss the part of the proposed legislation dealing with paid blood and plasma. Members may recall that a private for-profit company has established two clinics in Toronto and intends to pay \$25 per visit for plasma donations, up to a maximum of \$100 per month per person. A third clinic in Hamilton is also planned. Our government believes that allowing private clinics to pay individuals for plasma donations would risk the integrity of our voluntary blood donation system, which has been successfully administered for years by a single integrated national blood service. Canadian Blood Services was established as a central, national, not-for-profit organization through an agreement among federal, provincial and territorial governments. As an independent organization, Canadian Blood Services operates at arm's-length from governments and has complete management discretion over all operational blood system decisions. At the same time, Ministers of Health are responsible for the overall expenditure of public funds by Canadian Blood Services, for selecting a board of directors, and for the effectiveness of the overall blood supply system.

0940

CBS currently manages the blood and blood product supply in Ontario. Its activities include blood and plasma collection from Ontario donors and the procurement and distribution of plasma and plasma-derived products to Ontario hospitals.

Canadians are well aware that CBS has successfully managed our blood and blood product supply for more than 15 years. Because of the tireless commitment, dedication and hard work of CBS staff, Canadians can be confident in the safety and sustainability of our current blood and blood products.

However, the introduction of private for-profit plasma donation clinics in Ontario would radically alter the blood system currently in place in the province.

Our government is committed to protecting the integrity of the current CBS-led blood and plasma donation

system in Ontario. We know that this system works, and we have no compelling reason to risk drastically changing it by allowing the introduction of private for-profit plasma collection clinics in Ontario.

The foregoing forms the backdrop to the current situation in Ontario. Let me now turn to some of the actions our government took prior to introducing this proposed legislation.

On March 11, 2013, in a letter to the federal Minister of Health, Minister Deb Matthews called on the federal government to not approve any paid donor blood or plasma collection clinics until an open consultation with provincial health regulators, care providers, CBS and the general public was conducted.

In response, Health Canada held a targeted round table discussion with 26 participants on April 10, 2013. They also held an online public consultation, the results of which were not released.

The federal government has made it very clear that it believes that it is up to the provinces and territories to decide what to do about the question of payment for donations. That is why we are bringing forward legislation in Ontario to prohibit paying for blood donations.

As a first step, in March 2014 we amended regulations to strengthen licensing requirements for labs and specimen collection centres to prohibit paying donors for their blood or blood constituents.

On March 20, 2014, our government introduced Bill 178, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014, which would have made it illegal to provide or accept payment for blood donations in Ontario. Bill 178 passed second reading but died on the order paper with the dissolution of the Legislature in May 2014.

The new statute proposed in Bill 178 was reintroduced on July 22, 2014, with minor changes, as schedule 1 to the proposed Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014—Bill 21. Schedule 1 to Bill 21 differs from its previous iteration in Bill 178 in that it contains certain changes which were incorporated in response to stakeholder input and legal recommendations relating to enforcement. For example, the newly proposed Voluntary Blood Donations Act includes a provision which would enable the minister to apply to the Superior Court of Justice for a restraining order against persons who are not complying with the act. Similarly, schedule 1 would exempt blood that is given solely for the purpose of research, such as clinical trials or population health studies.

We are also proposing to amend the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act to authorize regulations to include or exclude places required to be licensed under this act, expand the public-interest grounds to deny a licence for new blood collection facilities, and strengthen our lab enforcement regime so that we can take quick and decisive action in cases of violation.

Speaker, we are proud of our volunteer donors and we strongly support Ontarians as they continue giving blood and plasma voluntarily. Our proposed legislation would, if passed, protect the integrity of the national public voluntary blood donor system.

Over the past year, we have heard from many health care organizations and individual Ontarians who are opposed to private, for-profit plasma collection, and we agree with them unreservedly. There is no identified need for such a parallel system in Canada, since we are fortunate to have a well-managed, centralized system, with strong quality assurance and oversight measures, that is now recognized as one of the safest in the world. The principle of voluntary donation is critical to Canada's blood system.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we must not allow our cherished publicly funded health care system and our voluntary blood donation system to be compromised.

The second part of our proposed legislation has a number of elements, but let me start with the background.

You will recall that in March 2013, Cancer Care Ontario advised us that two chemotherapy drugs used at four Ontario hospitals had been over-diluted. As a result, patients received a lower dose of these drugs to treat their cancer than had been prescribed by their oncologist.

In response, our government appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to review the underdosing incident and submit recommendations to prevent future similar incidents. Dr. Thiessen visited each of the Ontario hospitals where the underdosing had occurred, beginning with Peterborough Regional Health Centre, where an attentive pharmacy technician first drew attention to the differences in the labelling of bags of intravenous medication between the hospital's old and new suppliers.

On August 7, 2013, the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care released Dr. Thiessen's report, *A Review of the Oncology Under-Dosing Incident*. At that time, the minister committed to implementing the 12 recommendations contained in the report.

The report contains a detailed factual review of the case of underdosing of chemotherapy drugs at four Ontario hospitals and one in New Brunswick. Dr. Thiessen also developed recommendations that would prevent a similar incident from occurring again.

Dr. Thiessen's review found that there was no evidence of any malicious or deliberate drug-sparing dilution by Marchese Hospital Solutions. Dr. Thiessen reported that the health care system reacted quickly and effectively to protect patients upon discovering the incident, revealing a concerted resolve to address the issue squarely and urgently. He also found that the actions of professionals, including administrators, doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other personnel, were "a credit to our health care system."

I would like to take this opportunity now to thank our dedicated health care professionals for their continued commitment to caring for their patients, and to their patients' safety.

Dr. Thiessen's report contains a number of recommendations to prevent future incidents, directed towards five entities: group purchasing organizations, Marchese Hospital Solutions, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario Hospital Association, and Health Canada.

The review highlighted a number of factors that led to the chemotherapy drugs being over-diluted. Among these was the fact that the medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies were not standardized across the province. And, although currently the Ontario College of Pharmacists has the authority to inspect community pharmacies, it provides no oversight of hospital pharmacies. That is the responsibility of the hospital itself. So, in the interest of protecting patients, the report recommended that the college also inspect hospital pharmacies. This would allow for a consistent standard and mandatory compliance of operations when they have the potential to put patient safety at risk.

We have accepted all the recommendations of Dr. Thiessen and are continuing to work closely with the college, hospitals and other impacted sectors as well as with Health Canada on areas that are outside the province's jurisdiction.

The ministry established an implementation task force composed of government and stakeholder representatives to oversee the implementation of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations. By late April 2014, all of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations were either completed or well under way to being implemented, and as a result, the task force was disbanded. Ongoing oversight to ensure the recommendations continue to be implemented is being provided through existing relationships with the ministry and its partners.

Recommendation 12, relating to allowing the Ontario College of Pharmacists to license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's hospitals, is not currently provided for in legislation, hence these proposed amendments.

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First, we're proposing to amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, which is the statute that currently gives the college the authority to license and inspect pharmacies in the community. The act, which would be modified as appropriate for the hospital context, already sets out the framework the college needs to perform inspections, provide for quality assurance monitoring and enforce licensing requirements.

Second, the proposal would build in regulation-making powers for the government to extend the college's oversight of pharmacies in other settings, if the need is identified in the future. This mechanism would facilitate potential expansion of the college's oversight without further amendments to legislation.

We have been working very closely with the college and the Ontario Hospital Association on these amendments and will continue to do so. Both support the licensing proposal for hospital pharmacies and have expressed strong interest in working together to develop the necessary standards and processes to enable the new licensing scheme, if legislative amendments are passed.

At the same time, we are introducing additional amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act to strengthen oversight and protect patients better. We are proposing to:

(1) Enable health regulatory colleges to more readily share information with public health authorities, as may

be required for the administration of the province's Health Protection and Promotion Act. Currently, health regulatory colleges are under a general duty to keep all information that comes to their knowledge in the course of their duties confidential, subject to certain specified exceptions in the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991. These confidentiality rules are designed to assist the college in carrying out its regulatory functions. Therefore, health regulatory colleges are only able to share information obtained in the course of carrying out their duties with other entities, including with other public health authorities, in accordance with those specified exemptions.

Health regulatory colleges have indicated to the ministry that their consideration of when they do and do not have the authority to disclose information to public health authorities under the existing legislation scheme in the RHPA is not always straightforward. This is why we are proposing to add additional exemptions to the RHPA in order to further clarify the authority of health regulatory colleges to share such information with public health authorities as may be required for the administration of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, in order to allow such entities to better carry out their crucial public health functions and to better safeguard the well-being of all Ontarians.

(2) Permit regulatory colleges to share information with a hospital where it was obtained by a college's investigator. Currently, as discussed a moment ago, when a college acquires information during the course of an investigation that may be relevant to patient care and safety in hospital, the college's ability to share such information may be limited in accordance with the confidentiality exemptions currently set out in the RHPA.

Let's say a college investigates a gastroenterologist and obtains information in the course of an investigation of a complaint that, for example, indicates a potential issue relating to the quality of diagnostic service provided at a public hospital where the gastroenterologist also practises. This information could conceivably improve the hospital's processes, which could result in better patient care. Unless the college can establish that the sharing of such information would fall within an existing confidentiality exemption as currently set out in the RHPA, the college may be prevented from sharing such information with that public hospital.

As such, the amendments being proposed here are intended to allow colleges to more readily share information with a public hospital and with other prescribed entities in circumstances where a college is investigating a complaint involving a member where the information was obtained by an investigator appointed by the registrar of a college. In particular, a regulation would set out the purposes for which such information could be shared with the public hospital, together with any additional restrictions regarding the sharing of the information by a college with hospitals as well as with other persons.

Accordingly, the bill would also create new Lieutenant Governor in Council regulation-making authority to pre-

scribe any additional persons—for example, other than public hospitals—with whom colleges could share information, where a college is investigating a member; and prescribe purposes for, and any limitations on, the sharing of such information.

If our proposed amendments were passed, a public hospital would be better able to receive information from a college in a timely fashion, where appropriate, regarding college investigations that may be relevant to the safety and care of their patients, and to take any necessary and appropriate action on that basis.

(3) Require a hospital or other employer to make a mandatory report to a health regulatory college where a regulated health professional has resigned, voluntarily relinquished or restricted his or her practice or privileges and where the hospital or employer has reasonable grounds to believe that such an action was because of concerns regarding the member's conduct or practice related to professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

Such mandatory reports are an important feature of the RHPA's legislative scheme and are intended to ensure that the colleges receive information regarding their members' conduct that they need but might not otherwise have, in order to carry out their public protection mandate.

In the past, the health regulatory colleges have expressed concerns to the ministry that such mandatory reports are not being made with sufficient frequency or are potentially being circumvented. The current provisions in the legislation contemplate the requirement for a mandatory report where the hospital or employer intended to terminate an individual or to revoke his or her privileges but the individual resigned or relinquished his or her hospital privileges.

Our proposed amendments in the bill are intended to address these types of situations and expand the existing mandatory reporting requirement. Specifically, a hospital or employer that intended to terminate an individual or to revoke his or her privileges would be required to make a mandatory report to a college where a member resigns or voluntarily relinquishes or restricts his or her privileges or practice, and a person who employs or offers privileges to a member has reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation is related to the member's professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity. These important changes would allow the colleges to better carry out their mandate to act in the public interest and protect patients.

(4) Allow the government to more quickly appoint a college supervisor in order to address any serious concerns regarding the quality of a college's administration and management of its operations.

We are proposing amendments to the existing power in the statute to appoint a college supervisor that would more closely align those provisions with, for example, the hospital supervisor provisions under the Public Hospitals Act. In particular, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, upon recommendation of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, would be able to appoint a college

supervisor where the minister considers it appropriate or necessary.

The act also sets out a number of factors to be considered by the minister before making such a recommendation to appoint a supervisor, as well as the requirement to give notice of such an action to the relevant college and to review any submissions made by the relevant college to the minister concerning the proposed appointment.

(5) Finally, provide health regulatory colleges the flexibility to better focus their investigation of complaints on those matters that could potentially, if established, constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

Under the RHPA scheme, colleges are required to investigate every complaint received by the college. Health regulatory colleges have clearly indicated to the ministry and the government that, in their experience, the investigation of unmeritorious complaints places the college's limited resources under unnecessary pressure and prevents more timely investigation of other complaints that are more clearly relevant to issues of patient care and safety.

Under our proposed changes to the legislation, the RHPA would be amended to permit the college registrar to streamline the complaints that would be investigated by the ICRC. The registrar would be able to make a determination, within 30 days of the receipt of a complaint and prior to the appointment of a formal ICRC panel to investigate the complaint, that it is not reasonable to believe that the allegations contained in the complaint, if established, could constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity on the part of a member. As such, the complaint could not properly be considered to be within the regulatory scope of the college and would not need to be investigated.

In order to balance the addition of such an authority for the registrar with the need for complainants to feel that their complaints are being dealt with thoroughly and fairly by the college, the legislation would also provide the complainant with the option of requesting a review of the registrar's determination by a panel of the college's ICRC which is struck expressly for that purpose.

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I'd like to thank the College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association for working with us so diligently in the spring and early summer of 2013 as, together, we investigated what happened in the chemotherapy underdosing incident and, even more importantly, for helping us to ensure that it does not happen again.

These proposed amendments would go a long way toward reducing the possibility of such an incident in the future. With the help of our health regulatory colleges, the amendments will enable a more rapid and integrated response to potential future incidents and enhance communication among entities that are responsible for patient safety.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to stand and talk to Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. In all honesty, I want to compliment the minister and his staff for bringing forward this bill. I think it's long overdue.

When we talk about the chemotherapy issue that came out last year, the underdosing, I'm glad to see that they are putting in provisions whereby the Ontario College of Pharmacists will be given the authority to license and inspect all hospital pharmacies. That type of incident is just unthinkable, let alone unheard of. Of course, you think about the patients who were, in fact, affected by that and the concerns of the families and everyone else. We just can't have that. So I was glad to see there's greater oversight that is being provided by the ministry in that regard.

With regard to the fact that Ontario doesn't collect enough plasma to be completely self-sustaining, I think that, of course, we need to have additional provisions.

This particular bill actually addresses six acts: the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, the Health System Improvements Act, the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act, the Public Hospitals Act, the Regulated Health Professions Act and, of course, the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act.

Again, I see this as a tightening up of a system that is long overdue. I do appreciate the effort. We will be supporting this bill with amendments to it as well, as we see there may be some additional opportunities once this bill gets into committee. Again, I commend the minister for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad that this bill has come forward once again in the Legislature because my riding of London—Fanshawe and the city of London—and the Minister of Health is nodding. He very well knows how terrible it was in our area with the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. We had the most patients affected out of all those 1,119 patients. So it was very devastating to us, and I'm not going to go over a lot of the things that happened in the very short time in London where people's confidence was shaken in the health care system. But this certainly really made people stop and think about how this could have happened. So it's good to see that there is going to be that oversight with the College of Pharmacists to go into the hospital pharmacies.

But what was really concerning to New Democrats was that this type of thing was outsourced out of the hospital to begin it with, and it just spun out of control. Now here we are putting more legislation in place for something that we should really have had—there has to be a lot more foresight when we make legislation in the House that affects people's health: analyze it and figure out how that is going to affect other areas outside of the health care system and how it eventually comes back to patients.

One thing I do want to point out, though—and I had my lawyer friend here look into the legislation. I'd like to know what the definition of “exceptional circumstances”

is, where the Canadian Blood Services are able to pay for blood donations and research. That's something I'd like to put to the minister: What is the definition or the parameters of what's exceptional in this bill?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to talk for a couple of minutes about two really important components of this bill. It's really good to hear that members of both parties have said they agree fundamentally with the principles of this bill and are working together to move it ahead. I hope—and count on the opposition parties supporting this very important piece of legislation.

I think, like all Ontarians, we were shocked by what happened with regard to the chemotherapy drugs. But this legislation, as has been pointed out this morning, will go a long way to fixing that problem and making sure that there are regulations in place, that there is oversight in place, to make sure that doesn't happen.

Following the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s, Canada's blood system was established on the principle of voluntary donation. It was poignant—to me, anyway—this morning that we had a breakfast, sponsored by a hepatitis C group, to talk about new treatments for that disease. I know that this rings true with them.

It's a belief in voluntary donation that was upheld by the Krever commission, which recommended that donors of blood and plasma should not be paid for their donations except in rare circumstances. I think that, going forward, that's what people in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora have told me when I've talked to them about issues around this, and I think that's true right across Ontario.

We look forward to the participation and thoughtful input of the members opposite in moving this bill ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm pleased to rise to comment on the leadoff today. I think it's a very serious question. I'm glad to hear there's more oversight, because I think that in a lot of areas over the last while, we've seen this missing.

It brings up some questions about the voluntary donations. It's a serious question, because 70% of the plasma that we use is actually imported and comes from paid donors. I think we'd like to see some discussion at the committee stage, to have some serious discussion. It's easy to turn a blind eye and say, "We are not going to do it."

When you know that significantly more than half the blood you receive is through paid donations that are outside of your control, sometimes it's better to look at it and have some control over the situation and the patients who are coming in. It's not an easy question, and there's not any right answer on this, but I think it needs some careful consideration and a chance for the parties to get together and seriously look at what the right answer is. As I say, sometimes when you can control the conditions,

you're better off than just straight importing, because then you do lose control.

There have been a lot of serious things that have gone on in the past, like the chemotherapy issue. As long as there are people involved, there are going to be mistakes. Trying to reduce the opportunity for those mistakes to happen again is always worthwhile. It's very unfortunate that it happened. It likely won't be the last thing that happens. When people are making decisions on formulas and trying to get them right, there's always that chance for a mistake.

We're looking forward to this bill. We will support it. As I say, I think some of the issues need to be looked at in committee, and we look forward to that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Either the minister or the member from Halton has two minutes.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: First of all, I want to thank the members opposite, the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex and also London–Fanshawe. I really appreciate the fact that you all are pleased with this move and also are supporting it. We all agree, I think, that these restrictions are timely and are very important to protecting our health care and ensuring that our systems are safe and secure.

Once again, our government is committed to protecting the integrity of the current CBS-led blood and plasma donation system in Ontario. We know that this system works, and we have no compelling reason to risk drastically changing it by allowing the introduction of private for-profit plasma collection clinics in Ontario. These actions that are being proposed are going to ensure the safety of our system for everyone.

Following the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s, Canada's blood system was established on the principle of voluntary donation. This belief was upheld by the Krever commission, and it recommends that donors of blood and plasma should not be paid for their donations except in rare circumstances. The commission also recommended that Canada's national blood system should be administered by a single integrated national blood service.

I think the proposals that we are moving forward with today and putting before the House support and reiterate the fact that we need to make sure that our system is safe. After all, this is ultimately about protecting our Ontario residents, protecting people when they are ill and ensuring that our system is safe and delivers service as efficiently and as well as possible.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to a quarter after 10, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to welcome a constituent from my riding, Ray Linseman, who is here with the Pro-

fessional Engineers of Ontario. I think he's allowing the Premier to come down for question period; I know he was just talking to her.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to give a warm welcome to a good friend of mine from Windsor, Mr. Bill Carter. Bill is the board chair of the Canadian Automobile Association. Welcome to all of his colleagues who are here today as part of the CAA advocacy day.

I'd like to also extend an invitation to you and all the members to join the CAA lunch reception taking place in room 228. Again, welcome everyone to Queen's Park today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. We'll get through this quickly, please. As a reminder, just introduce your guests, because all these other announcements are the responsibility of everybody else, so that we can get all of those wonderful introductions done.

The member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It gives me great pleasure today to announce that Josée Stephens is a page captain, and her mother Tina; father, Troy; and brother Bowen are here in the west members' gallery. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Harris: I would also like to welcome Amy Bryson, a board member of CAA South Central Ontario; Teresa Di Felice, the director of government and community relations and driver training with CAA; Elliott Silverstein, the manager of government relations; and Jeff Chesebrough, vice-chair of CAA Niagara. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the members' east gallery today, we have Mark Wales, who is president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture; and Eleanor Renaud, who is a director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today William and Jenny Kapteyn from Sarnia—Lambton, whose grandson Callum Robertson is a page with us today. I'd like to ask the members to welcome them.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming Gurbir Singh Mander. He's a student from Castlereoke here at Take Our Kids to Work Day; I've adopted him for the day.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to welcome Piers Burnfield Wiebe, who is joining us today from Harbord Collegiate for Take Our Kids to Work Day. Welcome, Piers.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to introduce members of the Queen's University PC Campus Association: Vanessa Walsh, Stuart Clark, Scott Clark, Kanivanan Chinniah, Edward Burroughs and Michael Mastromarco.

I just want to say to the Premier: They are PCs; hands off. I saw you over there recruiting them a little while ago. I know you're a grad from Queen's, and we appreciate that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, okay. Thank you.

York Centre.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I would like to welcome Warren Ali, a former Queen's Park staffer, and his son, Adrien.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'd like to welcome Matthew Turack, division president for insurance at CAA South Central Ontario; Chris Stamp, director of automotive services, CAA South Central Ontario; and Jack Campbell, chair of CAA North and East Ontario. I just want to mention that the CAA South Central office is in my riding of Thornhill.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce Pam Orchard, Jill Lang Ward and Marsha McWhinney who represent Myeloma Canada. They have made the journey from Algoma to come down and visit us, so I certainly wanted to welcome them to Queen's Park.

We also had the visitors from Hepatitis C Ontario who came and treated us to breakfast this morning: Stéphane Lassignardie, Dr. Jordan Feld, Melanie Kearns, Cheryl Dale and Alex. Thank you very much for the insight into hepatitis C.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to introduce two great constituents of mine from Ajax, Ontario: Bev and Dave Sheehan. Bev and Dave are here today in the Legislature at Queen's Park to see their grandchild, a wonderful page. I know that any other introductions will be made by the Speaker. I thank you for that opportunity.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have two introductions today. Already introduced from Malahide council is Mark Wales. Thanks for coming down, Mark.

Also, my nephew Matt Yurek is here today. It's Take Our Kids to Work Day, and he decided to come and hang out here and see what we're all about.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Marie-Thérèse, the page captain for today, has family in the east members' gallery today: Rosa Campione, her mother; Phil Campione, her father; Elizabeth-Anne Campione, her sister; Catherine-Rose Campione, her sister; Joseph-Paul Campione, her brother; Beth Taccad, a friend; and her grandparents, Giovanna Mete and Vittorio Mete. I hope they have a wonderful day here today.

Mr. Bill Walker: I may have missed this when the member for Northumberland—Quinte West did the introduction, but I want to make sure that Bowen Stephens, the brother of page Josée, is also acknowledged in these remarks, along with Tina and Troy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It's with great pleasure that I welcome representatives from the Canadian Treatment Action Council and the Canadian Liver Foundation to Queen's Park, who were here this morning for the legislative breakfast on hepatitis C. Thank you so much for joining us.

I also want to take the opportunity here to welcome Myeloma Canada's first QP day. I want to welcome Cindy Leder, Norma Lindner, Jill Lang Ward and Bob McCaw. Please welcome them.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'd like to welcome Sharon Rider here today. She's a constituent of mine. She spoke very well this morning at the legislative breakfast on hepatitis C. We welcome her here today as well.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As many others have mentioned, I'm very happy to have the following reps from CAA here with us in the members' gallery: Matthew Turack, Tracy Nickleford and Jay Woo.

As well, I'd like to introduce Adam Green, who is here today working with MTO for Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like you to join me in welcoming representatives from the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences. They're here to watch and learn from question period.

Mr. Grant Crack: It's my pleasure to welcome a good friend of mine from Scarborough—Rouge River, Kumar Ramcharran, and a really good friend as well, Monsieur Alain Lajoie, de Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. They're in the members' east gallery. I welcome them to Queen's Park. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm really excited to welcome my niece, Aleks Windsor, to Queen's Park today, and also a former legislative page, Julia Brunet, both from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: In the gallery opposite, I'd like to welcome my friend Chris Drew, who played a very important role in the cycling components of Bill 31, which is now before the House.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I know that in the top two rows opposite me, we have young people who are visiting either guardian parents or family friends who work at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. I'd like to welcome them here this morning. I had a great opportunity to meet them.

Also, from the beautiful riding of Don Valley East, we have Andrew Greene, who's joining us here today.

Mr. Steve Clark: I didn't see her here in the House. I just want to welcome a long-time director with the Leeds county Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Eleanor Renaud.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to welcome into the House the representatives from Professional Engineers Ontario. The president, David Adams, invites everyone from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to the dining room for a reception. Welcome, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the support you have provided to Justice Bélanger in the Elliot Lake report. Thank you very much. Merci.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to introduce to the Legislature today Kim Gavine from Conservation Ontario and Julie Cayley from Ducks Unlimited. Welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure to welcome the family of our wonderful page, Colston Howell: Ellen Heron Howell, Tate Howell, Deirdre Heron and Helene Polatajko.

Also, we have Shayna Wise-Till, who's here with her mother, who works for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

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Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm not sure if Daniel is here, but I'd like to welcome Daniel Hoogsteen from my riding of Burlington. He's here for Take Our Kids to Work Day. Daniel is a former page in the Legislature.

I also add my voice to colleagues across the House in welcoming our friends from CAA to the Legislature today.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: We've had numerous introductions of many, many people here today. If anyone is feeling left out, I would like to welcome you personally to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's okay. That used to be my old line when I wasn't sitting here.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One.

In the Speaker's gallery today, we have the grandparents of page Morgan Walker: Beverly Sheehan and David Sheehan. Welcome. Yes, you're allowed to stand and be recognized. That's quite all right.

We also have with us former member David Warner, from Scarborough—Ellesmere, from the 30th, 31st, 33rd and 35th Parliaments, and Speaker in the 35th Parliament. He's accompanied by his wife, Pat. Welcome, Pat.

We also have with us in the gallery today Yasunori Nakayama, the newly appointed consul general of Japan in Toronto. He's accompanied by his deputy consul general, Tetsuya Yoshimoto.

We thank all our guests for being here today.

I will remind the members that it does make it go easier if I do the introductions as quickly as possible. I make the commitment to you that I shall always try to have our guests recognized, so I will take a little bit more time as necessary, as long as you help me get that done quickly by not doing other announcements. Those responsibilities are yours outside of the House, and I'd appreciate your co-operation.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington has given notice of his intention to raise a point of privilege. I am prepared to rule on the notice without hearing further from the member, as standing order 21 permits me to do.

Since the member's notice makes clear that his matter relates entirely to proceedings in a legislative committee, it is therefore not appropriate that this first be raised in the House. Matters arising in committee may only be dealt with in the House on a report from the relevant committee.

In the absence of such a report from that committee, I can only find that the member's attempt to raise a point of privilege in the House at this time is premature.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question, this morning, is to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Minister, yesterday we talked about how in the last 15 months the Fairness Commissioner has expensed over \$3,400 in limousine rides, \$3.41 for airplane headphones and even \$43.35 for a sightseeing tour in Finland—all to Ontario taxpayers. Yesterday, you also refused to answer a simple question, and that was whether you agreed with these types of expenses and entitlements.

Minister, I'm going to ask you again: Has your office ordered the Fairness Commissioner to repay these unfair expenses, and if so, how much has the Fairness Commissioner paid back?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member opposite for his question.

Speaker, our government has expense guidelines in place. They're very clear. We expect them to be respected by all public officials at all levels of government. The Fairness Commissioner is required to follow the guidelines of the OPS travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive.

I understand that the documents disclosed to the PCs include expenses submitted to ministry officials that are not necessarily approved expenses. It is also my understanding that while expenses were paid and others withdrawn, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is currently reviewing all the Ontario Fairness Commissioner's expenses.

When this review is complete, I plan to release all expenses online to the public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Minister, yesterday, your office stated that the Fairness Commissioner had withdrawn or paid back the unfair expenses. But according to an email dated January 2014, your deputy had approved all expenses submitted except for \$18.92 worth of meal claims. That means the limo rides were approved and the sightseeing tour was approved.

Minister, I believe taxpayers have a right to know that your ministry paid over \$20,000 in expenses in the last 15 months for what is described as a part-time job that already pays \$1,700 per week. Minister, there's a simple solution: Will you immediately order the Fairness Commissioner to begin posting her expenses online for all people in the province of Ontario to see?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. I wish the member opposite listened to my response. I have said I have instructed my ministry to start examining all the Ontario Fairness Commissioner's expenses. When the review is completed, I plan to release them publicly, and it will be posted online.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the minister: Ontario's current Fairness Commissioner is the first and only Fairness Commissioner that Ontario has ever had. She was appointed by your predecessor, the MPP for Eglinton—Lawrence, in exchange for giving up her federal seat to failed Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. Minister, according to her website, the Fairness Commissioner presides over 13 senior staffers, one of whom is a close relative of the person who appointed her.

Minister, do you think it is fair for government appointees like the Fairness Commissioner to hire and employ relatives of the very person who appointed them?

Hon. Michael Chan: Again, thank you very much for the question. Speaker, our government has always been, and will always be, committed to openness, transparency and accountability.

That's why we have brought forward Bill 8, the accountability act, which is currently before the House. The act will require all MPPs and senior executives in all agencies to post their expenses online, including the Fairness Commissioner. Bill 8 proposes to amend the Public Sector Expenses Review Act to provide the Integrity Commissioner with the ability to review executive expenses. The scope of the Integrity Commissioner's review will expand to all 197 classified agencies, including the OFC.

Speaker, I'm sure that the member opposite will urge his caucus to pass the act.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we showed that, despite your Deputy Premier's denial that she had any knowledge of the problems at Ornge prior to December 2011, an email from officials in her own office indicated otherwise. A document entitled "Confidential to the Minister" dated April 27, 2010, reads: "Ornge has advised the ministry that they have embarked upon a number of initiatives that were not contemplated in the original performance agreement." That's another one of the red flags that the committee was referring to in their report.

Premier, are you personally satisfied that your Deputy Premier knew nothing about the problems at Ornge before December 2011?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member opposite is aware that there were many changes made at Ornge because the former Minister of Health knew that there were changes that needed to be made, and she made those changes: a new CEO, a new board of directors, a new senior management team. In fact, as I have said, it was exactly the Deputy Premier, in her role then as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, who made those changes.

When our government learned of the issues at Ornge, action was taken. The fact is that there is now a piece of legislation before this House that would further make changes at Ornge and would improve the oversight. So I hope that the members opposite will support us and will work to get that legislation passed.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Premier: Your dogged defence of your Deputy Premier in the face of damning evidence against her tells Ontarians that you would rather defend one of your own than take responsibility for at least four deaths caused by your government's negligence.

Another document the committee reviewed is a confidential ministry briefing note dated October 27, 2010, detailing the freedom-of-information requests from 2009, both by the Ministry of Health and the Management Board of Cabinet. The freedom-of-information requests ask about Dr. Mazza's salary, procurement policies at Ornge, and their purchase of speedboats.

Premier, are you still prepared to stand by your Deputy Premier's position that she knew nothing of the troubles at Ornge in 2010?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, what I'm standing behind is the fact that our government took action, led by the Deputy Premier in her role then as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We took action and we made changes at Ornge. We put in place a piece of legislation that is before the House, and actually has been before the House since February 2013, when Bill 11 was first introduced. It has been before the House. We hope that the opposition will work with us to get that passed, so that increased oversight will be in place for Ornge.

The fact is that the committee has now got the report. The report has been released, and I understand it was a Liberal motion that got that report tabled. That's a good thing. We're glad that the report is now available.

As I say, we want to make sure that there is as much oversight and as stringent oversight as possible. That's why we need the help of the opposition to get that legislation passed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Premier, your persistent denials would be comical but for the fact that your Deputy Premier's see-no-evil, hear-no-evil strategy on Ornge contributed to the deaths of four Ornge employees. Your Deputy Premier either didn't read these documents, or she read them and chose to ignore them. Either way, patients in Ontario died because of the negligence of this Deputy Premier and your government.

Premier, I ask you again: How much more proof do you need before you will demand your Deputy Premier's resignation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, Mr. Speaker, I understand, when a member is given a set of questions to read, that there's a huge temptation to just read those questions and not actually think about the answers and not actually think about the issue at hand. The fact is, we have worked very hard to restore the confidence of the people of Ontario in the air ambulance service.

This is a very serious issue. I think the member knows full well that we took action when we learned that there were problems at Ornge. We took immediate action to change the leadership, and we have continued by putting in place a piece of legislation that would further increase the oversight of Ornge.

I really believe that the member opposite should pay attention to the changes that have been made—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville will withdraw.

Mr. Steve Clark: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—should pay attention to the changes that have been made. If there are substantive issues around the legislation that he has got a comment on, let's hear those as opposed to just a mindless recitation of rhetoric that actually doesn't move the issue forward.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The side comments, we can do without.

New question.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This government's austerity budget shows that almost every ministry will be facing average cuts of 6% this year, next year, and the year after that.

Can the Premier tell Ontarians how many people she's planning to fire?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What's interesting about this question from the leader of the third party is that we introduced a budget last May, and she then decided that it was time to go to an election. We went to an election. We ran on the budget as a cornerstone of our plan, and so did the leader of the third party. She ran on the same fiscal plan, except she said that she was going to find \$600 million more in savings.

The reality is that we are facing a challenging fiscal situation. We understand that. We also know that we have to make investments in infrastructure and in people's talents and skills. We have to work in partnership with business if our economy is going to grow. That's the plan we ran on, that's the plan she ran on and that's the plan we're implementing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We've sent an FOI to the Treasury Board asking who they plan to cut and what services they plan to cut. Instead of giving an answer, they refused to provide anything at all.

So I did ask the Premier a question. I think Ontarians would like to know where she is going to cut. The bottom line is this: Will this Premier be straight with Ontarians about who it is that's going to be getting a pink slip from this government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will just say that this is an interesting question from a number of perspectives. Yesterday, the leader of the third party was on at us about our plan to optimize assets, to actually find a way to make those assets work better for the people of Ontario so that we could make investments in transportation infrastructure that's needed across the province.

Now, today, she doesn't want to talk about that because she doesn't want to talk about where there might be money coming in, in order for us to make the investments that we need. Today she wants to just isolate one

piece of our plan which is, yes, to transform our services to make sure that we deliver health care in a way that is the most cost-effective and to the best benefit of the people of Ontario.

So I think she's trying to have it both ways. It would be good if she looked at the whole plan, which she ran on, which we're implementing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier's fairy tale doesn't wash on this side of the House. She obviously didn't look at the details of our plan, but that's fine.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Thank you. Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Whether it's a dad who relies on a speech therapist for his daughter, or a doctor who relies on a highway being plowed so she can go to work, or an employee who relies on inspectors to make sure their workplace is safe, Ontarians rely on public services. All I would like is for the Premier to come clean with Ontarians about what services she's going to be cutting.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to reassure the leader of the third party that I did look at the nine-page plan that they put forward. I looked at it very closely. It didn't take a long time but I did look at it very closely. What I saw was a plan that was based on our plan. It was a plan that made all the assumptions that we made about what this economy needed in order to grow, with the exception, for example, of any investment in the Ring of Fire. There was nothing in the NDP's plan about the Ring of Fire. There were huge gaps in terms of how they were going to find, for example, \$600 million more than we said we needed to find.

So the reality is we are confronting a challenging fiscal situation. We have appointed a President of the Treasury Board to make sure that we look across government and we make the changes that are necessary to preserve services and, at the same time, make government work as efficiently as possible.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Coincidentally, it's about making government work more efficiently.

A study by experts at the University of Toronto has shown that P3 projects cost on average 16% more than publicly financed projects, but for some reason the Premier said she was proud that a quarter of Ontario's infrastructure projects were being done with P3s.

Now, can the Premier tell Ontarians why she thinks it's good to pay 16% more for a quarter of our projects, costing Ontarians more money?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I think is good, responsible and absolutely necessary is that government work with the private sector, that we find a way for those kinds of partnerships to bring benefit to the people of Ontario.

1100

The fact is that you look across the globe right now and there is no jurisdiction that is not struggling with how to build infrastructure, including China, where there is a really important move to find ways to co-operate with the private sector in order to get the amount of infrastructure built that they know they need.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we're working with the private sector, and because we're working with the private sector, we have dozens of projects across this province that are being built that would not be built otherwise.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday the Premier spoke to the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships to pat them on the back and promise to hand them more money.

That same study that I just mentioned caught the attention of media, and one reporter—

Hon. Brad Duguid: You really hate the private sector, don't you?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One reporter said, "P3s become vehicles for governments to subsidize inflated profits of powerful and well-connected contractors and financial institutions."

When the Premier was telling the P3 association just how much she loved P3s, can she tell us whose profits she was actually inflating?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's look at what the alternative financing and procurement model has accomplished here in Ontario. Infrastructure Ontario is currently managing over 80 major AFP infrastructure projects, 37 of which have reached the end of construction. Of these 37 projects, 36, or 97%, were completed under budget, and 27 of them were completed on time. AFP projects, as the member has said, represent approximately 25% of capital investments in the year 2014-15.

The fact is, there are roads and bridges and transit projects that are being built across this province—in Ottawa, in Kitchener-Waterloo, in all parts of the province—that would not be being built if it were not for the partnership with the private sector. The fact is, we have no ideological bent that says we cannot work with the private sector, as they do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When the government signs P3s, they're helping out powerful and well-connected contractors and financial institutions. That's the fact. Our own Auditor General has said the exact same thing.

Yesterday, the Premier visited those contractors and financial institutions to tell them what a great job they were doing in charging Ontarians more for something the government can do itself for 16% cheaper.

New Democrats asked the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to table any evidence—any evidence at all—that P3s made any

financial sense, and we got nothing, Speaker, nothing back.

Does the Premier have any evidence at all to justify paying these well-connected contractors and financial institutions a 16% bonus for something that we can do ourselves?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think what's really important is that the people of Ontario understand that what the leader of the third party is asking is whether we will put the brakes on projects like the mental health facility that is being built at St. Joe's in Hamilton, whether we will put the brakes on those projects that are benefiting people in all parts of this province. The answer is no, Mr. Speaker, we will not put the brakes on those.

We will continue to make responsible investment. This government is investing billions of dollars of public money into these projects. Yes, we are working with the private sector, which is taking risk and delivering these projects on time and on budget. Will we stop that? No, we will not. We know that this building is needed for the economic growth of this province and the well-being of the people of Ontario.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ms. Laurie Scott: Premier, I stand again today to ask you to strike an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace. We owe it to the victims of sexual harassment to have this discussion. They need us to better understand the challenges victims face in determining when and how to come forward after an incident, and how institutions can better support and protect victims from further harm.

Premier, will you support this important dialogue by allowing all three parties of the Legislature to work together on a select committee on sexual harassment?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Labour is going to want to comment on the supplementary, but I just want to let the member opposite know what I have done in the last 24 hours—and I also know that the select committee issue is going to be discussed by House leaders; they're going to have that conversation.

I want the member of the opposition to know that I've had a conversation with the head of the Ontario public service, and he has already informed me that a comprehensive review is happening of OPS policies on discrimination and harassment and violence. That review is happening. It's very important, I think, that we understand that that kind of review is critical, that the kind of training that needs to happen on an annual basis is happening within the OPS, within the broader public service and, quite frankly, within our own legislative world. We need to make sure that all of that is in place.

I will continue to do what is necessary. The discussion around what further we may do will take place at the House leaders' meeting.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I appreciate the Premier's comments. We have the Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy here; it was given to us. All that is well and good, but if the victims are not coming forward or the policies are being ignored, we owe it to the victims to listen and to do better.

I bring up the case, again, of the assistant crown attorney being given a golden handshake of \$180,000 by the government. The women were never heard. Clearly, someone in the government had to sign off on that, and did not follow these policies, so the conversation does need to happen. That's why we asked for the select committee. The work does need to be done.

It's not just here in the public service. We've see it in the CBC but we've also seen it from brave people like former Toronto Star reporter Antonia Zerbisias, who said she had been raped more than once but never came forward. She has started a worldwide discussion through the social media hashtag #BeenRapedNeverReported.

Again, Premier, we owe it, as a government, to be a good force in people's lives, and allow the all-party—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Let me thank the member opposite for what is a very, very important question. We all have a role to play in ensuring that violence and harassment in Ontario workplaces is simply not tolerated. It's something we will not put up with. Everybody in this province, regardless of their gender, should be able to work in a safe and a healthy workplace.

Our government was the very first government in Ontario—this House, in 2009, passed Bill 168. What it does is, it very specifically requires employers in this province to have plans in place to prevent this from happening in the workplace and to deal with it as it happens in the workplace.

What employees need to know, what men and women in this province need to know, is that if they are suffering or they feel that they are suffering violence or harassment in the workplace, they have the right to refuse that work—you stop right now. If you think you are in imminent danger, you contact the police; if you think it's an ongoing issue you can't solve, you contact us at the Ministry of Labour.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. You profess to be a progressive politician. You profess to say that you want to govern in a way that's open and transparent to the people of Ontario. But when we look at your record so far in this majority, you're doing exactly what Dalton McGuinty did and you are time-allocating everything under the sun.

So I am asking you, as a fellow member of this assembly, why is it that you are choosing not to allow the

public to have their say on these very important bills, such as daycare, and not allowing the committees to be able to travel outside of Toronto to hear what they have to say about this very important issue? Why are you like Dalton McGuinty, and why don't you stop time-allocating?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member from the third party for the question. I think all members in the House recognize that we received a very strong mandate from the people of Ontario on June 12. They have asked us—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to hear. Please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Ontarians have asked us to move forward with a progressive agenda that was put forward in a budget that was passed in this House, and a platform that really clearly spoke to the priorities of Ontario. They really have asked us to make sure that we stop having the stall tactics and gamesmanship that goes on in this House and pass important pieces of legislation that will make Ontarians' lives better. That's why we're making sure that those priority bills that were not passed in the previous Parliament are passed in this session as quickly as possible.

1110

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Premier, I would prefer that you answer the question, because you stood through the last election, you said you were progressive, you said you were going to govern differently, and you said you were going to engage the public in the decisions that face this Legislature. How can you say that at the same time you're not allowing people outside of the city to have their say on very important bills?

So I will ask you the question again: Why is it that you're time allocating at a time when the opposition is not even holding up the legislation? We've said to your House leader that we have no interest in slowing this down. All we want to do is give the public an opportunity to have their say. Neither this opposition nor the Conservatives are holding it up. Why are you shutting down the public's ability to have their say?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We are moving ahead with the progressive agenda of this government. We are moving ahead with bills like Bill 8, enhancing transparency for the public sector and MPPs. We are moving ahead with a bill that ensures we have a fair minimum wage in our province. We are moving ahead with a bill that ensures that we modernize child care so that our children are protected when parents drop them off at child care. And we are doing so in a responsible way.

Let's just take Bill 10 as an example, the Child Care Modernization Act. There will be hearings that will take place. There will be two days of hearings that will take place, and they will both go late in the evening so that parents and child care providers can have access to those hearings and they are heard.

But at the end of the day, our number one priority is the well-being of Ontarians, especially our children.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question today is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, I hear from my constituents in Burlington and from people across our province that growing the economy and job creation is their top priority. They are encouraged that Ontario's economy is growing faster than the national economy, and they feel secure that our path to balance is as responsible as it is compassionate.

But people continue to read stories, and they are concerned about the lasting effects of the global economic recession. As the world becomes increasingly globalized and new markets continue to emerge, the people of Ontario want to know how our province plans to compete with economies around the world.

Minister, can you please update this House on the steps the government is taking to compete with those emerging economies and how you plan to ensure that Ontario's economy continues to grow, despite the challenging global economic environment?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the wonderful member from Burlington for her question.

Ontario is indeed operating in a competitive and challenging global environment. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, as well as the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade on their successful trade mission to China. Already, this mission has attracted nearly \$1 billion to Ontario in new deals and is creating more than 1,800 new jobs.

Our government understands the importance of Ontario being recognized as a globally innovative jurisdiction, and this successful trade mission is just part of our plan to grow our economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Minister, it's great to hear that our government is continuously working to attract new jobs and investments on behalf of the people of Ontario. It is clear that Ontario is emerging from the global recession with strong fundamentals which will ensure we can continue to provide the programs and services that Ontarians expect and rely on.

As we reflect back on the accomplishments of the government and plan for the future, can the minister tell us more about the efforts our government is making here at home to grow our economy and eliminate the deficit?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you again to the member from Burlington. Our purpose is clear: It is to create opportunity and security for people, to build Ontario up while, at the same time, eliminating the deficit in a responsible and balanced way.

Our prudent path to balance is working. However, global uncertainty still remains. That's why we have a four-point plan for stimulating the economy, including:

—maintaining a competitive tax environment that encourages business to invest and grow;

—building strategic partnerships with business to stimulate innovation and productivity;

—moving forward with the government's Going Global trade strategy to tap into emerging markets like China; and

—helping businesses manage electricity and other costs to ensure our prosperity and competitiveness.

In fact, I look forward to updating the House further on our progress and our broader economic plan on November 17, when I table the fall economic statement.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the town of Fort Frances and area First Nations chartered a plane at great expense to fly 1,800 kilometres to Toronto to try to get your government's attention. The paper mill has shut down, and if they don't get some help soon, in a matter of weeks it could be lost forever. Expera, a speciality paper company, was interested in reopening the plant, but they could not get a reasonably priced supply of wood fibre, essential to make the project viable. That price is controlled by the past owners of the mill.

Premier, Expera was willing to invest \$100 million to create hundreds of jobs in northwestern Ontario. My question: Will you call the CEO of Expera and do what you can to close a deal that will create jobs and bring investment opportunities to Fort Frances?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. I would start by saying that the community of Fort Frances flew to Toronto with their supportive team for good reason, but I would say to the member that they didn't have to fly to Toronto to get our attention, because they've had our attention on this issue going back weeks ago: When the deal fell apart they had our attention, and since the deal fell apart they've continued to have our attention.

I mentioned yesterday in response to several questions that we will continue to work as closely as we can with the community of Fort Frances and with both of the parties to see what is possible. The member knows that at the end of the day this was a B2B arrangement that was trying to be consummated between, hopefully, a willing seller and a willing buyer. To this point the deal has not been consummated; we continue to be in contact with them and work as diligently as we can to see what is possible to try and breathe some life back into that deal.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: I don't think the Premier heard the question there, and that was that they asked for her to make a phone call to the CEO of Expera. I hope she will do that, though she passed the question on.

Premier, the sustainable forest licence in the Fort Frances area is controlled by the past operator of the paper mill. They're no longer interested in running the mill but continue to control the crown forest, the Cross-route Forest. Don't you think the licence to harvest wood,

or at a minimum an economic supply of fibre from nearby forests, should go to the company willing to locate operations and reopen the mill in Fort Frances?

Hon. Bill Mauro: To the member's point—and I said this in response to the similar questions yesterday—last week when the deal fell apart I did reach out to the CEO of Expera, and I talked to him. I talked to the CEO of Expera again just this morning. We are still working within our ministry, within government, to see exactly what is possible, if anything. I had a good conversation with him this morning; there were no commitments made from him back to me, or from me back to him, only for him to be aware that as a government and as a ministry we're still very interested in seeing something positive for Fort Frances.

The member should also know that it is not with a stroke of a pen that an eSFL is created. In fact, if we were to do it that way there would obviously be impacts for the current flow of that wood fibre to other operations in the province of Ontario. I would think that the member knows that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It would impact the flow to your riding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark, come to order.

Hon. Bill Mauro: As a result of that, his suggestion would be that we wouldn't be consulting with First Nations or with the community or with industry on what that eSFL should look like. That work would not have guaranteed anything. We're willing to look at all options to breathe life back into this deal, and we continue to do that.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan Games. The minister needs now to take responsibility for the missed deadlines and the mushrooming budgets of the 2015 Pan/Parapan Games. I've asked him about the first few games of the Tiger-Cats season that had to be relocated because the Hamilton stadium was not done when the government said it would be, and it is still—I repeat, still—not done. Now a significant soccer match that would have acted as a test run for the Hamilton stadium Pan Am readiness had to be moved to McMaster.

The minister, as is the Liberal way, didn't answer these questions, and never has, and now the city of Hamilton is openly concerned that the latest completion date won't be met, and a member of the local Pan/Parapan Am Committee doesn't think the completion date will be met. Speaker, does this minister think that the people of this province finally deserve an honest and full answer about the ongoing delays to significant Pan/Parapan Games venues, and the costs?

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and minister responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan Am Games.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's a long title. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The member was here in the Legislature, I believe, on Monday when I answered the exact same question in regards to the Hamilton stadium. He knows fully well that this is a \$146-million investment into the city of Hamilton. The people of Hamilton are quite excited with this venue. The Hamilton Tiger-Cats are undefeated in the stadium. In fact, if you talk to the people of Hamilton, you will realize that that region alone has brought in the most volunteers out of all of Ontario. So they're buying into the games. They've bought into the fact that they're going to have a brand new stadium. He is fully aware there's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The bantering back and forth has got to stop.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member knows, Mr. Speaker, that this is the largest investment in infrastructure here in the province of Ontario when it comes to our sport facilities, probably in the history of this province. We're going to go from a jurisdiction that was doing pretty well to exceptionally well, not only here in Canada but throughout North America.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Thanks for the travelogue, again. The people of Hamilton and the people of Milton, where the cycling velodrome is also not ready and where they also missed a staging test event, deserve better than a smiling, happy minister who says everything is great. No answers are coming from the other side, as usual.

We're not talking about a peewee hockey game here, Minister. We're talking about a \$260-million-and-rising multi-site international games for the people of Ontario, who could be on the hook for a lot more.

The minister's reputation is also on the hook. Will he take responsibility for the mess, end the rhetoric, take the lead with his cabinet colleagues, and make sure that these venues are going to be ready on time and on budget? I don't think they will be. In fact, I know they won't be.

Hon. Michael Coteau: We've had three technical briefings on the issue in regards to the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. We've gone through the venues. We've gone through the costs. I don't think the member opposite has showed up to any of those briefings, number 1.

Number 2, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the actual infrastructure projects that we have in operation in Ontario in regards to the Pan and Parapan Am Games—the Scarborough aquatics centre is fully operational. If you go in there, it's a big hub of activity. It is \$43.8 million under budget, number 1. Number 2, the Pan Am/Parapan Am Fields: \$2.9 million under budget. The Atos Markham Pan Am/Parapan Am Centre—

Mr. Paul Miller: Report about the stadium. Talk about the velodrome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's not talk.

Mr. Paul Miller: And I was at the briefings, by the way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The simple fact is, this government has made the largest investment into athletic infrastructure in the history of this province. We're proud of our record. We're doing this not only for the athletes here today but the athletes in the future. We're very proud of our record.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

HARCÈLEMENT SEXUEL

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, the Premier has just noted that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in Ontario and that we must remain vigilant when it comes to addressing this very serious issue. She told us that whether it is at work or whether it's at home, women in Ontario have a right to feel safe. I know that this government is committed to taking action and working collectively as we move forward.

Minister, can you please share with us what steps your ministry has taken to ensure that we are safe?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you to the member for Kitchener Centre for this very important and serious question. As we know, the Premier has taken a very active role on this issue. In fact, I want to share with the House that later this evening, the Premier will be delivering opening remarks at the official opening of the HeForShe campaign. This is a movement of over 119,000 men across the world who have committed to take a stand for gender equality. Over 12,200 people in Canada have done the very same thing. I would strongly encourage everyone in this Legislature to join this movement. Initiatives like HeForShe are critical because they raise awareness on this issue.

Mon ministère a pris des actions concrètes pour mettre le point sur la prévention de l'agression sexuelle. Those actions include \$15 million for a four-year plan and \$3 million for sexual assault centres in our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Minister. It's very encouraging to hear about a campaign like HeForShe. I think I speak for the entire caucus when I say that we are very proud of the Premier for taking action on this very serious matter.

Just last week, I had a meeting with some stakeholders at the Waterloo region sexual assault centre. Most of the conversation was about events at the CBC. I tell you, as a former broadcaster, I get it, having witnessed and experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Minister, can you please tell us what other policies are in place in the workplace to ensure that we all feel safe at work?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that very, very important question. As I said in re-

sponse to a previous question, we simply do not tolerate violence and harassment in Ontario's workplaces. It's that clear: Everybody in this province should be able to work in a workplace that is both safe and healthy.

To answer the question specifically, what we did in 2009, as a government, was make amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Bill 168. What that said is that all employers in this province have to have workplace violence and workplace harassment policies in place, and they also have to have programs that implement those policies in a serious way. There's a variety of information that we can provide from the Ministry of Labour if there's any employer out there that's watching today that wants to do better, that thinks that he or she wants to review those policies.

We also give the right to refuse work. Anybody who feels they're under duress in this regard should simply refuse to do the job and contact the police or contact us.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, Shane Burt is a 21-year-old man with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy who, due to his age, has been told he is no longer allowed to attend school.

In a matter of months, he has gone from having access to a walker, a stander, a bike, lifts, an exercise table, and an integrated computer system allowing him to communicate in a school setting, to having none of those things now. His family explains that no programming exists for his type of disability in the entire region, outside of a school setting.

Minister, the all-party Select Committee on Developmental Services released its final report in July. The 46th recommendation was for the inter-ministerial committee to work with families and community agencies to develop more day programming tailored to a wider range of needs.

Will you commit to providing day programming to meet the needs of Shane Burt?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for the question. Certainly, I cannot comment on any specific case, but I can say in general that we on this side of the House took the select committee's report extremely seriously. I did say in my ministerial statement, in some detail, that we were looking very closely at all 46 recommendations in that report. Certainly, we'll be taking the advice very, very seriously.

In terms of individuals transitioning specifically from one situation, an educational situation in particular, and moving through to adulthood, this is an area that I've asked my parliamentary assistant to focus on in terms of ensuring that these types of transitions are as smooth as possible and that a plan is in place at the earliest date possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Minister: The Burt family explains that no programming is available in our

area, and we have been in contact with your ministry, but I would be happy to provide you with Shane's particulars again.

As the family describes, Shane is like a six-month-old baby who understands everything. He can't walk and he can't talk, but when the proper programming is in place, he thrives. At school, he learned to float and roll over in a pool by himself. He helped serve food and dusted furniture at the local Brick store with his classmates. He had daily exercise and interaction with his peers.

The Burts want Shane back in school until programming in the community is available, and I don't think that's an unreasonable suggestion. In fact, a regulation under section 16 of the Education Act states: "The committee may recommend that an exceptional pupil who is 21 years of age or older remain in a secondary day school program."

My question is simple: Will you undertake to ensure that everything is done to see if Shane can't stay in the secondary program that he was thriving in?

1130

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, this is precisely the type of situation that caused us to invest some \$810 million over three years, particularly into this sector. I do recall that the two opposition parties voted against that budget, which is most unfortunate.

I do want to reassure the member opposite that in September 2014 my ministry, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Education implemented integrated transition planning for young people with developmental disabilities who are preparing for adulthood.

I'm very open to hearing more about this particular case, but this is precisely the work that we are committed to doing. We took the good advice of the select committee in this regard, and we will be moving forward.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Minister of Natural Resources: Minister, I believe first and foremost that the forest in the Rainy River district should serve to create jobs in the Rainy River district, as it has for the better part of 100 years.

Now the people in this town are left watching as their livelihood is being trucked away. I believe that the Crossroute Forest should be providing fibre to the local Fort Frances mill so that we can create 1,000 jobs and so that 1,000 people can pay their bills, but the minister seems content with the status quo.

My question is: Minister, is the reason why you're refusing to resolve this situation in Fort Frances because the wood is going to your riding to be processed instead of staying in Fort Frances?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask for order, and then I'm going to make an observation that we have to be very careful in the House when we make

comments that are coming close. I'll only offer a warning that impugning motive is not what we do in this place.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But I still think you're right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton will come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I wasn't looking at you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It doesn't matter if you're looking at me or not. That includes anyone who wants to add anything else.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: A week ago, I asked my staff, "Who do you think will ask this question?" I predicted it would be the NDP, so I was right.

This kind of question is so predictable from that particular party, and I will demonstrate to you by way of example for the member opposite why she is so misplaced in—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm still standing. And the Minister of Agriculture, come to order as well.

Carry on.

Hon. Bill Mauro: In 2011, three months before the provincial election, a mill in my riding, in Atikokan, called the Sapawe mill, that was owned by Buchanan, had 640,000 cubic metres of wood attached to it. Three months before a provincial election, our government took that wood away from the mill in my riding. Very shortly after that, that mill was torn down. Do you know where that wood went? It went to Fort Frances—the Resolute mill owned in Fort Frances. How did you feel about the flow of wood at that time? Were you standing up and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will withdraw.

Hon. David Zimmer: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. At this time I will also remind you once again: In this place we raise the level of debate.

Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I will tell the minister who the NDP is. We are the party in this Parliament that is standing up for the people of this province. It is your government that is making this mess. The people of Fort Frances are keen to work, and they are feeling angry and betrayed by your government's unwillingness to act. One thousand jobs will have a major impact on our community. Sustainably managing the Crossroute Forest in order to create jobs at the Fort Frances mill would bring stability and prosperity back to the northwest.

In fact, in 2011 New Democrats proposed changes to the wood tenure system that would ensure that when a mill

closes its doors, the wood allocations would revert back to the local community. Right now, the minister seems content with the status quo that is only benefiting his community, the community that he represents, instead of listening to the priorities of the people who live in the area where the wood is being harvested.

My question to the minister: Does this sound like good, solid, sound governmental policy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Bill Mauro: This particular member was so concerned about the Fort Frances mill that never once since it has been closed, for the last two years or so, has she written to this minister or this ministry in regard to the closure of that mill. That's how concerned she has been about that particular mill.

At the core of this is the tenure modernization piece. We introduced it in 2011. The members opposite, in both parties apparently, want you to think that if an eSFL process was in place for this mill—if that process had started a year ago, it would not have been concluded by now in all likelihood. Even if it had been, as I've said before, it is only one component of the deal that was required, hopefully between a willing seller and a potential buyer. It was only one phase. There were other components of the deal that were on the table that were being negotiated between the two parties. This was only one part of it.

As I've said repeatedly and will say again, even if the eSFL had been in place, it would not have guaranteed any deal. We continue to work with both parties and with the community to see—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. In my riding of Brampton—Springdale, one of the most frequent things I hear about from constituents is their experiences at ServiceOntario locations. My constituents depend on ServiceOntario for many important services such as licence plate sticker renewals, health card and driver's licence renewals, and obtaining birth certificates.

ServiceOntario is not just important to my constituents but to all Ontarians. The services they provide are essential and important to ensuring Ontarians have proper documentation to see a doctor or register their business. However, I've had constituents comment on the occasional longer-than-normal wait times. My constituents understand that delays are a part of life and that they do happen. They want to know what can be done to try to minimize these instances.

Can the minister please update the House on what his ministry is doing to alleviate wait times at ServiceOntario locations, not only in my riding but across the province?

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to thank my colleague from Brampton–Springdale for the question. She has raised a very important issue in her riding. Low wait times are one of the keys to customer satisfaction. We have many initiatives to shorten wait times that we're proud of.

In 2013, the average customer wait time at ServiceOntario centres was roughly nine minutes. Of our over 280 ServiceOntario locations, 97% of them had a wait time of less than 15 minutes. Recognizing that the ServiceOntario centre in Brampton has an above-average wait time, we recently launched a pilot project aimed at helping to improve the wait times in Brampton. Part of the strategy involved informing the public of the necessary documentation needed, as well as highlighting the option to use various online services for renewal functions.

We have moved over 40 of our services offered at ServiceOntario to online services, making transactions easily accessible. This past year, we made it possible to renew your driver's licence online—a first of its kind in Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My thanks to the minister for his response and for informing myself and the House of the important steps that the ministry has taken. These are all great initiatives towards reducing wait times at ServiceOntario, both in my riding and across the province.

There have been many other steps taken by ServiceOntario to ensure that wait times remain reasonable. As the minister said, many services are now offered online, some of them for the first time in Canada. These online services not only decrease wait times but increase the convenience of renewing documents for Ontarians.

Would the minister please update the House on what other ServiceOntario services are offered online and the benefits of completing transactions online?

1140

Hon. David Orazietti: Again, thanks to the member from Brampton–Springdale for the question.

By offering more services online, ServiceOntario is ensuring that Ontarians can access the services they need when they need them. One of the options is certainly the 15-day money-back guarantee when you order your birth certificate online. We also have a four-in-one bundle available where parents can apply for a birth certificate, a social insurance number, and both federal and provincial child tax benefit credits in one easy transaction.

This year we're encouraging people to renew licence plate stickers online. This will decrease wait times not only at the Brampton ServiceOntario location, but at ServiceOntario locations across Ontario.

Another important service is ONe-Source for Business, an online service portal that provides businesses with a single window to view and manage their relationship with different levels of government.

At ServiceOntario, we are focused on innovation and customer service excellence so that Ontarians will spend less time standing in line and more time online.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Premier. During a Liberal fundraiser in Stratford in November of last year, before the last election, you were asked about GO train service to Stratford. You were quoted as saying: "Full-day, two-way GO service is a priority, and expanding GO service is a priority."

I then asked you to clarify your plans for GO Transit in Perth–Wellington. It's now a year later and you still haven't answered. I have twice written to the Minister of Transportation and he still hasn't answered.

I ask the Premier: Can we conclude from your silence that you were just telling people what they wanted to hear before an election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member opposite for that question. I had the opportunity a number of months ago, Speaker, while at the AMO conference, to have a face-to-face conversation with the mayor from the community that he referenced, the mayor of Stratford. It was a great conversation.

As I've spoken to many mayors and council members and others from communities right across the province of Ontario, there is exceptional excitement, as there should be, about our government's very ambitious plan to invest significantly in transit and transportation infrastructure over the next decade.

I look forward to having continued dialogue and conversations with the mayor of Stratford and mayors and regional chairs from communities in York region, Durham, Peel, Toronto, Niagara and elsewhere while Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation continue to do their work, because all of our decisions going forward, as to where and how we invest that money that I mentioned a second ago, will be based on business case analysis and evidence so that we can provide positive results for communities right across the region and province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, that was an interesting answer. It looks like the government is leaving out even the possibility that GO trains could serve Stratford in the future. It sounds like the minister isn't even giving us something aspirational in nature.

I wrote to the Premier in November 2013. She sent my letter to the Minister of Transportation. On April 15 of this year, after months of silence, I wrote to the minister's predecessor. I wrote again to this minister on September 23. My letters remain unanswered.

The government's silence is deafening. When will this government start planning for the future and acknowledge the need for future GO service expansion to Stratford? And, Speaker, when will it start answering its mail?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I have to admit to the Legislature that I find this truly fascinating, not only the question that I hear from this member today, but the questions that were raised last week from some of his colleagues while I was at estimates committee.

Since my time in this Legislature, since first being elected in 2012—at every instance I've heard nothing from members of that particular caucus and party about anything with respect to building Ontario up, anything with respect to making more investments in crucial infrastructure. What I've heard, time and time again, is about their fascination with the need to slash and burn at every turn. Yet, while at estimates committee last week, while I stand in my place at this moment, while I did last week as well, whether we're talking about that community or others, I hear repeatedly about their somewhat belated desire to support our plans to invest in crucial infrastructure. It's peculiar to me that I hear this repeatedly.

What I can tell that member is that over the next decade, this government, under the leadership of this Premier, will invest \$29 billion, up to \$15 billion for the GTHA, up to \$14 billion for the rest of Ontario, to deliver—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Thank you.

New question.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Yesterday, media and ministerial staff were invited to tour the Windsor Jail in my riding, yet I was explicitly denied access. It's ironic that a government touting transparency denies elected officials access to government facilities.

Perhaps the minister didn't want me to point out that, like the old jail, our new South West Detention Centre is overcrowded and understaffed. Offenders making up 80% of the maximum capacity are crammed into 60% of the facility's space. Also, Windsor's male intermittent offenders are being shipped to London.

While the minister thinks his misstatement of this file is limited to only four to six male intermittent offenders, I want to remind him that the problems in our correctional system impact correctional officers, staff, families and the general public.

When will the minister be proactive, not reactive, when addressing the problems of our correctional system?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, I want to thank the member for yesterday, for reaching out to me to get more information about the Windsor Jail and the tours that we are hosting as we open the South West Detention Centre.

I want the member to know—and I'm sure she has received an invite—that on Friday, November 14, she's getting a VIP tour of the jail, along with the judiciary, the mayor, the council members, area MPPs, MPs, the police chief, the fire chief and the former superintendent. So I hope she will be able to attend a special tour that has already been planned, along with all the elected representatives, on Friday, November 14.

Speaker, I am very excited by the challenge and the mandate that the Premier has given to me, and that is to transform our correctional system. I look forward to working with all members of the House and getting their

ideas as to how do we have a correctional system that focuses on rehabilitation of our inmates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, on a point of order: Earlier during question period, you ruled to dismiss my notice of privilege, and you made reference to standing order 121 that it first must be raised in committee. If I may, Speaker, I attempted to raise this matter in committee on Monday evening. However, the Chair refused to consider the matter, due to the time allocation—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've made my ruling and that's the end of it. In terms of anything else, you need to bring that back to committee.

Mr. Paul Miller: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I just want to clarify the record that the minister claimed that I didn't attend any—and I did—he came—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the amendment to the motion of allocation of time on Bill 10.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 4, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion 7.

Mr. Bisson then moved the motion to be amended by deleting all the words after the second paragraph and submitting the following:

“That the committee shall travel for up to five days outside of Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings, as determined by the committee.”

Ms. MacLeod then moved that the amendment be amended as follows:

“That the number ‘5’ be deleted and replaced with the number ‘7,’ and that the words ‘as determined by the committee’ be deleted and replaced with ‘in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury.’”

All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment by Ms. MacLeod will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique

Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Mantha, Michael
Marlow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Marlow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the amendment to the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Orazietti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Bra

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Nays

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Orazietti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 44; the nays are 56.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

Is the House ready to vote on the amendment by Mr. Bisson?

Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the second paragraph and substituting the following:

“That the committee shall travel for up to five days outside of Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings, as determined by the committee.”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have to wait until all are seated.

All those in favour of the amendment to the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnett, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Orazietti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario

Ayes

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 44; the nays are 56.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment lost.

Is the House ready for the vote on the main motion?

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 7 for the allocation of time on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1203 to 1204.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad

Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Sousa, Charles
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 44.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Ajax–Pickering.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to be back in the Legislature with you at control of the helm.

I would like to again welcome the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario. We have representatives here with us now, and they are: the vice-president and secretary, Denise Magi; Keith Deviney, the president; and other MEAO directors, including Ted Ball, John Dougherty and Adrianna Tetley.

Just for the record, MEAO is a registered charitable organization which offers support and advocates on several things, which we will address later.

We welcome all members of the Legislature to visit with us between 228 and 230 after 3:45.

Thank you for the flexibility, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm very pleased to rise today to recognize the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of

Ontario, also known as MEAO for short, on their annual community engagement day at Queen's Park.

In October 2013, a business case proposal for an Ontario Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health was presented to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care with the objective of ensuring that effective and appropriate care is given to individuals who suffer from chronic, complex environmentally linked illnesses. To date, there has been no answer from the ministry on the approval of the business case proposal.

Our caucus health critic and Whitby MPP, Christine Elliott, recently met with members of the interim steering committee of the Ontario Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health to discuss the issues facing the hundreds of thousands of patients who are now, and have been for many years, without care.

Sufficient time has now passed to deliberate the business case, and we are calling on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to act. Time is of the essence.

Today there are approximately 570,000 people in Ontario living with chronic complex environmentally linked illnesses, such as myalgic encephalomyelitis, or chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and multiple chemical sensitivities. Individuals living with these conditions have overwhelming fatigue and a host of other debilitating symptoms that can get worse after mental or physical activity but do not improve with rest.

I would like to thank the association for their excellent advocacy work for Ontarians living with myalgic encephalomyelitis and associated illnesses. We look forward to receiving the health minister's update with regard to his approval of this proposal.

SUDBURY MULTICULTURAL AND FOLK ARTS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Joe Cimino: It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association on their 50th anniversary of serving Greater Sudbury and northeastern Ontario.

As a former city councillor, I was fortunate to really get to know and become friends with the wonderful members, staff and volunteers of this organization. I am sincerely impressed with their commitment to our community, a community that celebrates with them the beauty of multiculturalism. Our part of the world is a better place because of the work this organization does to welcome newcomers and help them transition into our community.

The SMFAA champions cultural sharing and the passing on of our traditions to our youth. This group also organizes the annual Canada Day festivities at the Sudbury community arena, which is a proud showcase of our city's many heritages.

The association administers a Newcomer Settlement Program that includes services such as facilitating employment, ESL and FSL classes, community referrals, and relevant legislation discussions.

The association also has a multicultural youth council made up of members aged 10 to 25. This group partici-

pates in ethnic dance and fundraising and interacts with other community organizations. They assist in organizing events such as the international day against racial discrimination, Human Rights Day, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms day, and prevention of violence against immigrant women awareness.

Lastly, the SMFAA is involved in cross-cultural education. They visit schools, hold international cooking classes and organize days around the themes of celebrating multiculturalism and anti-racism. Again, congratulations to the Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association on their 50th anniversary.

SIKH REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'm pleased today to speak about the seventh annual Sikh Remembrance Day Ceremony, being held at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Kitchener this upcoming Sunday. This historic Sikh Remembrance Day Ceremony takes place every year at a location of unique military significance in Canada: the gravesite of Private Buckam Singh, the only military grave in Canada of a Sikh soldier from the world wars.

Private Singh was born in India. In 1907, at the age of 14, he moved to Canada. He joined the Canadian forces and was wounded twice on the battlefields of France. In fact, Canadian soldier Private Buckam Singh was one of only nine Sikh soldiers allowed to serve with the Canadian forces in the First World War.

Buckam Singh's war medal and grave were only discovered by sikhmuseum.com after having been forgotten for nearly a century. His war medal is the only known surviving military medal of a Sikh Canadian soldier from World War I. With the discovery of this war medal and military grave, the Sikh community has reclaimed a forgotten son and Canada has reclaimed the story of a hero.

Let us pay tribute to Private Buckam Singh and all those brave Canadian men and women who made sacrifices to protect our freedom. I especially want to recognize the service of our Sikh community for advancing the principles and values that make Canada the great country it is today.

ONTARIO LEGISLATURE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure today to share my support for the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme. For almost 40 years now, the program has been providing recent graduates with the opportunity to work with members of provincial Parliament, gaining practical experience with the daily workings of the Ontario Legislature.

I can say, from my own experience working with interns, that the program provides a variety of learning opportunities: everything from helping members write statements and questions or research relevant issues, to

participating in comparative study trips to other Legislatures.

I've had the honour of working with three interns who have all excelled in their own personal way, and today I would like to welcome my fourth intern, Kristy May. Originally from East Gwillimbury, Ontario, Kristy completed her bachelor of environmental studies at the University of Waterloo and master's at the University of Guelph. She shared with me her excitement to work with my office and me on environment and climate change critic portfolio issues, as well as local issues facing my riding. I look forward to showing Kristy how much Huron—Bruce matters.

To close, I'd like to share with the Speaker and everyone else in the House that I'm proudly wearing green today, because it's Show Your 4-H Colours day. I would like to invite everybody to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, where youth from across the province and Canada will travel to the city—where country meets city—bring their animals and show how proud they are to be raised on farms.

MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise today in recognition of the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario community engagement day. Today is a community engagement day for the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario—MEAO is the acronym. In October 2013, a business case proposal for the Ontario Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health was presented to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. To date, there has been no answer on the approval of this business case.

In the NDP, we have a strong commitment to keeping people healthy, supporting health promotion and disease prevention, and ensuring a sustainable health care system.

From the business case proposal from the OCEEH, we learned that over 568,000 people in Ontario have been diagnosed with this chronic complex and environmentally linked illness. That's 5% of the Ontario population. We also learned that people suffering from these conditions experience systemic barriers to getting the health care they need, because diagnosis and treatment of these serious conditions are not currently available in Ontario's health care system.

Now we're hearing from MEAO that over \$150 million is spent annually to serve people suffering from environmentally linked illnesses, but it's done in a fragmented way that does not achieve the desired health outcomes.

We believe this has to change. It's time to support the proposed Ontario Centre for Excellence in Environmental Health and ensure that people suffering from environmentally linked conditions receive the effective and appropriate care they need to move forward in their lives. I want to commend those who are here today, on behalf of those affected and afflicted by MEA.

GRAND RIVER BREWING

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: In 2007, I was driving past the century-old red brick building in Cambridge that had been the home of the Galt Knife Co. I noted that construction workers were working, renovating the building's large multi-paned heritage windows. This was the beginning of a wonderful, adaptive reuse of a heritage building which transformed into the Grand River Brewing company.

1510

Imagine the delight of my very good friends who learned that a craft brewer was setting up shop two minutes from their home. I do believe they were their first customers.

Indeed, as Grand River Brewing began distributing their craft beers to local restaurants, pubs and community events, the residents of Cambridge were delighted to have this unique brewery right in the heart of our beautiful city. Not only do we have a preserved heritage building, but Cambridge has a thriving and expanding business that has created local jobs.

Speaker, it is clear that CEO Bob Hanenberg's dream has become a rousing success.

Many of the fine craft beers crafted by Grand River Brewing have won several Ontario and Canadian Brewing Awards, including my personal favourite, Plowman's Ale.

Grand River Brewing offers brewery tours and a hospitality room for tastings and local events. I would welcome and encourage all members in this House to visit my riding of Cambridge to stop in for a very enjoyable pint.

PHRAGMITES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Phragmites, the European common reed, has been referred to by ecologists as Canada's worst invasive plant.

Invasive phragmites release toxins from their roots into the soil and impede the growth of local plants. These toxins can even kill other plants. They force out local vegetation, resulting in decreased plant biodiversity.

These tall, densely growing weeds can reach up to five metres in height, can cause damage to the natural habitats they grow in and can also cut off food supplies for native wildlife, including several species at risk.

Speaker, phragmites can grow so thick that even deer can get caught up in them and eventually die.

In my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex and in many other areas of the province, they contribute to flooding as they spread throughout ditches, roadsides and our highways. They're so thick that they can even prohibit natural water flow. I've seen this first-hand, most recently while working with farmers in the Leamington area during the Essex County Ploughing Match.

To see just how far widespread phragmites are, all one needs to do is travel Highway 401 between Windsor and London to see this invasive plant growing in the medians

and ditches. In some cases, on county roads, phragmites actually impair visibility to oncoming traffic—an accident waiting to happen.

Thus far, Ontario has taken a piecemeal approach to combatting phragmites. It's recognized as an invasive plant but not a noxious weed.

The Ontario Phragmites Working Group has established four recommendations to help control and manage phragmites. These recommendations include emergency use permits for herbicides, approval of aerial treatment application, establishing a province-wide control program and, lastly, establishing an invasive species act.

I encourage the government to address this growing nuisance head-on before it spreads out of control.

MYELOMA CANADA

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I had an opportunity to meet with volunteer representatives of Myeloma Canada, including Leslie Weatherby, who lives in my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West.

Leslie, along with other volunteers, came to Queen's Park today to help us understand more about this disease and the kind of treatments and support that patients and their families need.

Myeloma Canada provides educational resources and emotional support to patients, families and caregivers; increases awareness of the disease and its effects on the lives of patients and families; promotes clinical research and access to new drug trials in Canada; and facilitates access to new therapies, treatment options and health care resources.

Myeloma is the second most prevalent form of blood cancer in Canada. Nearly 1,000 Ontarians are diagnosed with myeloma every year. While there's no cure, early diagnosis and the right treatment at the right time will save lives and save the health system money in the long run.

I commend Myeloma Canada for the work they do every day for patients and volunteers living with this disease.

I also urge my colleague the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to continue to champion for a national rare disease strategy that will make new treatments more affordable.

MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to once again sponsor the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario—MEAO, of course, is the acronym—who are here today for their community engagement day at Queen's Park. That will be just down the hall, on the west end of this floor.

I have sponsored this association many times over in the last several years for their extremely worthy cause. MEAO supports hundreds of thousands of patients in Ontario who have complex, chronic, environmentally

linked illnesses. As pointed out numerous times over the years, these patients experience systemic barriers to getting the health care they need because diagnosis and treatment of these very serious conditions are currently unavailable in Ontario.

One year ago, MEAO, together with the Association of Ontario Health Centres, submitted a business case proposal for the Ontario Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, but to date, approval has not yet been given to the business case proposal. I request, and I'm sure others do, that with the assistance of our good Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Dr. Hoskins, we approve the business case proposal for the Ontario Centre of Excellence and assist hundreds of thousands of people.

Members are welcome immediately after this, of course, down the hall at rooms 228 and 230. We welcome to see you all. I will sit down so I can go down there and speak shortly.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr1, An Act respecting The Loretto Ladies' Colleges and Schools.

Bill Pr3, An Act to revive Bensfort Wood Inc.

Bill Pr4, An Act to revive Bruno's Alignment Limited.

Bill Pr6, An Act respecting The Macdonald Stewart Community Art Centre.

Bill Pr9, An Act to revive 1807041 Ontario Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

INVASIVE SPECIES ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR LES ESPÈCES ENVAHISSANTES

Mr. Mauro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act respecting Invasive Species / Projet de loi 37, Loi concernant les espèces envahissantes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to reintroduce the proposed Invasive Species Act. This legislation would provide a strong legislative framework to better prevent, detect, rapidly respond to and eradicate invasive species in Ontario. If passed, this landmark legislation would help by providing the powers to intervene earlier, so invasive species do not become established and lead to significant social, environmental and economic costs for Ontarians.

If the proposed legislation is passed, Ontario will be the first jurisdiction in Canada that has stand-alone invasive species legislation. With the introduction of the proposed Invasive Species Act, Ontario is taking a leadership role with significant and necessary action to address the social, ecological and economic threats posed by invasive species to our great province.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And I'm speaking as the minister responsible for women's issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I rise today to recognize November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario. Our government believes that all women deserve to live free from violence and from fear of violence.

1520

While abuse of women crosses every social boundary, aboriginal women are at particular risk. Nationally, recorded incidents of aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing aboriginal women total 1,181 as of November of last year. Between 2001 and 2011, at least 8% of all murdered women aged 15 years and older were aboriginal, double their representation in the Canadian population. They are 2.5 times more likely to experience spousal violence than other women. In Canada, aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely to be victims of violence than non-aboriginal women. In Canada, aboriginal women are almost three times more likely to be killed by a stranger than non-aboriginal women.

Our government is investing in initiatives and working with many stakeholders to bring down the high rates of violence against aboriginal women. We're investing \$2 million over the next two years to support the excellent work of our Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women. This is a broad coalition of five aboriginal organizations and 10 government ministries working together to end violence against both aboriginal women and girls.

So it's against this backdrop of co-operation in Ontario that I must express my profound disappointment

that the federal government is missing in action on this very important issue.

The federal government continues to resist calls from many quarters and many provinces, including ours, and the call of Premier Wynne for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The federal government skipped the National Aboriginal Women's Summit last month, at which important progress was made. I was there with my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. It was at that summit, with representation from all provinces and territories, where plans were developed to hold a national round table on the issue, even in the absence of the federal government.

Our government, Speaker, will not abandon aboriginal women and girls. We will not be an empty chair at a conference. We will support aboriginal women and girls and help make their lives safer. We will do that because our government is committed to seeing that all women in Ontario are safe in their homes, in their workplaces and in their communities.

In 2011, we launched our Sexual Violence Action Plan, working with community organizations to raise awareness and better support victims. And since we established our groundbreaking Domestic Violence Action Plan back in 2004, our government has implemented many initiatives to combat domestic violence. Among them is the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign to help people recognize the signs of woman abuse and teach them how to help an abused woman. This initiative includes francophone, aboriginal, and immigrant and refugee communities across Ontario.

November has a number of significant dates and activities that allow us to recognize the work being done by communities across Ontario to end abuse against women and to renew our commitment to ending violence that still affects far too many women.

I urge all Ontarians and MPPs in this chamber to support these campaigns because ending woman abuse is absolutely everybody's responsibility. Let us build on our success and finish the work that is before us so that all women and girls are safe and secure and are able to be successful in life.

I will now ask my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to outline in greater depth the government's commitment to the safety of aboriginal women and girls.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to join my colleague Minister MacCharles in recognizing Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

Violence against aboriginal women and girls is a serious issue for First Nations, Inuit and Métis families and their communities. The statistics are deeply troubling. In some northern aboriginal communities, it is estimated that 75% to 90% of women experience violence.

Preventing and ending violence against aboriginal women and girls requires collaboration not only between the ministries and aboriginal partners, but all our partners, all Ontarians, all Canadians. We have a role to play.

In 2010, our government established the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women to provide us with direct advice on how best to tackle this important issue.

The working group consists of 10 Ontario ministries as well as the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Independent First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the aboriginal partners for their hard work, their support and their dedication to putting an end to this violence. Our partners are delivering vital programs and services to prevent violence and support aboriginal women on their healing journey. For example, the Ontario Native Women's Association has implemented Talk4Healing, a free and culturally sensitive telephone helpline available to aboriginal women in northern Ontario. The help line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides counselling and support to help aboriginal women and youth who are experiencing violence and abuse.

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres has delivered several campaigns to raise awareness and provide resources to aboriginal communities. For example, the "I Am a Kind Man" campaign uses the seven grandfather teachings to engage aboriginal men, youth and children in preventing violence.

Mr. Speaker, violence against aboriginal women is complex. Last month, I attended the National Aboriginal Women's Summit with the minister responsible for women's issues. It was a great opportunity for leaders from across Canada to share their experience and their knowledge, as well as to identify areas to work together in. Regrettably, however, yet again the federal government did not attend that national conference.

Planning is now under way to convene the national round table on violence against aboriginal women. It will take place in February. We are working with the National Aboriginal Organizations and the provinces and territories across Canada. Our government is committed to participating in this round table so that we can work together on an action plan going forward.

Mr. Speaker, violence against aboriginal women, and indeed against all women, must be stopped. Our government is committed to working with all levels of government and with our aboriginal partners to end violence and help aboriginal women, children, their families and their communities to move forward through the healing process.

Meegwetich. Thank you.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to stand in this House today to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Take Our Kids to Work Day. Today, more than 250,000 grade 9 students in Canada are spending the day learning in the workplace of a parent, relative or friend.

I am delighted to have Piers Burnfield Wiebe, who is up in the gallery here, a grade 9 student from Harbord Collegiate, joining my office today as part of Take Our Kids to Work Day. Welcome again. He was here for question period too.

I would also like to welcome all of the grade 9 students taking part in learning opportunities today at the Ministry of Education, as well as all of the other ministries across government and in the offices here at the Legislature.

I'd like to thank the Learning Partnership, who have been sponsoring this program since 1994 and helping grade 9 students get a head start to their future by providing career options that connect them directly with the world.

Take Our Kids to Work Day is a unique way for students to experience a day in the life of a profession or a workplace. We know that students today are more likely to have many careers over the course of their lifetime, and we need to equip them with the tools they need to be part of Ontario's highly skilled workforce. Take Our Kids to Work Day is one of many programs that create opportunities to help students see the connections between their studies, the world beyond high school and their future careers. Additional career-oriented programs for students include the Specialist High Skills Major Program, the Dual Credit Program and Co-operative Education—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: My son is in that and it's great, in the specialist program.

Hon. Liz Sandals: It's a good program. Yes.

These programs allow high school students to tailor their experience through a variety of enhanced learning options. I am pleased that approximately 42,000 high school students are enrolled in Specialist High Skills Major programs this year, including Minister MacCharles's son, and each one is spending more than 220 hours in hands-on work placements in their sector of focus.

1530

Through the numerous activities and programs, including Ontario's co-operative education programs, an estimated 40,000 employers across the province provide over 80,000 high school students with valuable work-related learning opportunities. We want to thank each and every one of those 40,000 employers for helping us to educate our students.

Programs like these have helped us to achieve impressive results over the past decade. In 2003, the graduation rate in Ontario was 68%. That's equivalent to about one third of students not graduating from high school. With the help of innovative programs and hard work by parents, teachers and school administrators, our graduation rate is now at 83%. What this means is that there are more than 138,000 students who are on a better path in life because they've graduated from high school.

We want to give students meaningful workplace learning opportunities to gain valuable skills and experience that they will need for their future careers. Take Our Kids

to Work Day provides this for grade 9 students. It's another wonderful opportunity for Ontario students to get real-world experience.

We know that experiential learning is helping students achieve excellence, which is a key goal of Ontario's renewed vision for education. The other goals of the vision include ensuring equity, promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence.

Ontario's renewed vision for education will help to prepare our students for a productive and successful future, and our renewed vision provides the necessary focus for everyone to work together to ensure that all students in our publicly funded education system feel engaged and included.

Speaker, again, I extend my thanks and appreciation to the Learning Partnership.

I encourage everyone in this House to recognize this day and support our students as they take part in learning opportunities in workplaces throughout Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm honoured today to rise, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, to respond to the ministers' statement on Woman Abuse Prevention Month and violence against aboriginal women—and for the women who are wearing purple today, that is the colour that has been designated. Today we acknowledge the need to continue to work together to prevent violence against women, and we recognize that it's everyone's responsibility to end woman abuse.

Woman abuse is insidious, and much of it goes unreported. It can take many forms: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse. Every day this week, during question period, I have stood and asked the Premier to take action by striking an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the Ontario workplace.

While the allegations that have been brought forward in the media are deeply disturbing, what is more troubling is the number of women who have come forward from all walks of life with their stories of harassment. Roughly 54% have experienced some form of workplace sexual harassment, while 27% say they have experienced harassment by a colleague, and 17% were harassed by their superior. Of these claims, 79% of victims of workplace harassment are women. And of every 1,000 sex assaults in Canada, there are three convictions.

Clearly, this is an issue that has been ignored for far too long, and it's time that the Ontario government took a closer look at how the gaps in the current system can be diminished.

Countless women have shared their stories of abuse with the powerful Twitter hashtag #BeenRapedNeverReported. The hashtag was created by a former Toronto Star writer who shared her own stories of rape.

Women all over the world are still blamed for the violence committed against them. They are blamed if

they speak out and if they don't. It's a wonder that anyone comes forward at all. The reasons why women may not report abuse are complex and intractable, and so deeply ingrained that they span generations and cultures.

Several weeks ago, all three parties supported the motion to request the federal government to support the National Aboriginal Organizations' request for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in order to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and severity of the issue.

We owe it to the victims of all abuse to have a discussion—and as I have said this week, I have asked many times to strike an all-party committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace. By doing this, I think we can provide effective recommendations to combat the serious issues facing women in the workplace.

Violence against women has many costs, and perhaps the greatest cost is when we, as a society, look away. This is our opportunity to address the issue and give victims a voice.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the PC caucus and my colleague MPP Garfield Dunlop, the PC critic of education.

Today marks the annual national program Take Our Kids to Work Day that many students across Canada take part in. It was my pleasure today to be joined by my nephew Matthew Yurek, who came up to shadow me, and last year I had my other nephew, Greg Fougere, up for his Take Our Kids to Work Day. So it's great that we can bring our nieces and nephews and children to the Legislature.

Take Our Kids to Work Day was founded by the Learning Partnership, a not-for-profit organization, in November 1994 in the greater Toronto area, and has since expanded to be a nationwide initiative, with students participating in every province and territory in Canada. This program currently involves more than 250,000 students and 75,000 organizations each year.

I think it is vital to allow our students to work and volunteer in the workplace throughout the year. My constituency office in St. Thomas hosts student volunteers and co-op students year-round. As all members of this Legislature can attest to, our constituency offices are a fast-paced environment that presents itself with many different experiences, challenges and people throughout the day.

I am proud to say that there are currently 20 students participating in the Take Our Kids to Work Day at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in my riding. It is great to see so many students take an interest in our health care system by choosing to participate in this program at this great health care facility.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Learning Partnership for taking a lead on this great program, as well as to all the employers in the province who open

their doors to students, not only today but every day, giving students the opportunities that they might not otherwise get in the school system.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I, too, want to thank the Learning Partnership for their efforts to give young people access to the work world. Parents are proud to bring their children to work, and I'm sure their children appreciate it.

The minister noted that this program helps prepare our young people for a productive future. The piece that is too often missing is the work for those children when they graduate from school. Regularly, my constituents come to me about the dire situation their daughter or son faces when they finish college or university and find no work. Highly qualified graduates with large debts are often working at jobs far below their skill, if they get work at all.

It's a good idea to bring our children to work; I think it's an even better idea to make sure there are jobs for them when they finish school.

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's an honour to be able to rise today in the House and speak on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath, about Woman Abuse Prevention Month and violence against aboriginal women. Of course, November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month, but clearly, every month should be Woman Abuse Prevention Month. The instances in the media of late bring that quite home.

A few stats: Of those 8% of the 460,000 incidents of sexual assault in Canada, only 0.3% led to a conviction. And you wonder why women are reluctant to come forward and report sexual assault.

Locally, here in Toronto, I can tell this House that Victims Services Toronto, the only front-line agency that provides support services for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse immediately—they go with the police on calls to every site and they provide assistance to victims and survivors. They work seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and for their efforts their funding has been reduced from \$286 per victim in 1990 to \$31 per victim in 2010.

1540

In Waterloo region, the 473 women who sought shelter at one of our two shelters stayed there for 20,000 days of residential care. Since 1995, 16 cases in Waterloo region were intimate partner homicides.

Fourteen per cent of female murder victims in Canada are aboriginal women, despite making up only 4% of the female population in Canada. It's important to keep in mind, when considering this issue, the fact that aboriginal communities are very diverse, much like the rest of Canada. Aboriginal communities vary from one community to the next, but 75% of aboriginal girls under the age of 18 have experienced sexual abuse—this is from

Correctional Service Canada, cited from 2007. Research has found that the average age that aboriginal girls are forced into the sex trade is 11 or 12. This is a painful and heartbreaking stat.

This is the reality of these young children in this country and in this province. Sexual abuse at that age—at any age, quite honestly—has the power to steal a part of you; it steals your innocence. That should drive home the need for this House to refocus our attention on prevention and on education, and also on helping those victims recover from sexual abuse.

In the media, of course, it's hard not to address the issue with this Jian Ghomeshi—I hate even saying his name. My friend sent me this: "Personally, I think the most telling aspect of this horrible situation is that all of the women, regardless of where they were in their lives and careers, regardless of loving friends and family, felt unable to fight back and felt they would not be listened to. While Ghomeshi appears to have incredible narcissism, it was allowed to flourish in a work environment that made him feel unassailable"—above the law. "I think one of the lessons for organizations"—and governments, given the news of the day at the federal level, where allegations have been placed against two MPs for sexual harassment—"is that you still have to be able to cast a cold critical eye on even your most prized success stories."

Our success story in this Legislature is when we educate, when we empower, and when we fund victims' services. When we get that done, then we will be successful.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

HOSPICE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank the good people at Lilac Lane Quilts, which is a store located next to my constituency office in Alliston.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario; and

"Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and among the lowest-funded in the province, even though it serves as many clients or more than other hospices that receive greater provincial support; and

"Whereas Matthews House has been told by the Central LHIN that LHINs do not fund residential hospice operational costs and yet hospices in other LHINs, including Barrie, Huntsville, Richmond Hill, Owen Sound and now Collingwood, all receive operational funding from the province; and

"Whereas in February 2010 Matthews House Hospice was promised a solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN which has never materialized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Wynne government immediately develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with hospice funding to ensure that people in south Simcoe and all Ontarians receive equal access to end-of-life care."

I agree with this petition; I certainly will sign it.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm going to read a petition. Many of the signatures are from the police, firefighters and paramedics from Elliot Lake, from the Algo Centre Mall collapse.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas emergency response workers (paramedics, police officers, and firefighters) confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

"Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

"Whereas Bill 2 'An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder' sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 'An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder'."

In response to all these heroes, I sign this and give it to Félix to be delivered to the table.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly with regard to population-based legal services funding.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's and others is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To request that the Minister of Health direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Jamie.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Gregory to take to the table.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid

clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Félix to deliver.

1550

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Auditor General confirmed that no comprehensive evaluation was completed by the McGuinty government on the impact of the billion-dollar commitment of renewable energy on such things as net job losses and future energy prices, which will increase another 46% over the next five years; and

"Whereas poor decisions by the McGuinty government, such as the Green Energy Act, where Ontario pays up to 80 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity it doesn't need and then must pay our neighbours to take it for free, and the billion-dollar cost of the seat-saving cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas power plants, have contributed to making the cost of Ontario power the highest in North America; and

"Whereas there has been no third party study to look at the health, physical, social, economic and environmental impacts of wind turbines; and

"Whereas Ontario's largest farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, have called for a suspension of industrial wind turbine development until the serious shortcomings can be addressed; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has removed all decision-making powers from the local municipal governments when it comes to the location and size of industrial wind and solar farms;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government support Huron-Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson's private member's motion which calls for a moratorium on all industrial wind turbine development until a third party health and environmental study has been completed."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to Danielle.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

“Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year’s WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

“Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

“Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

“Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers’ lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Renée.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “Whereas the Liberal government of Ontario is currently reviewing proposals to sell off a significant amount of our shared public assets such as Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Hydro One, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); and

“Whereas our shared public assets provide more affordable hydro, develop environmentally friendly energy, create thousands of good Ontario jobs, and are accountable to all Ontarians; and

“Whereas our shared public assets put money in the public bank account so we can invest in hospitals, roads and schools; and

“Whereas this Liberal government is more interested in helping out wealthy shareholders and investors than they are in the hardworking Ontarians who are building this province; and

“Whereas Ontario is stronger when there is shared prosperity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Stop the selling-off of our shared public assets. Keep our public assets in public hands.”

I sign this petition and hand it to page Gregory.

SENIORS’ HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants in dwellings and long-term-care homes from sudden and unfair increases to their rent; and

“Whereas ancillary costs such as the provision of meals and other services ... are not subject to the” same “act; and

“Whereas there have been episodes of repeated, large and unjustified increases to the stated costs of meal provision in ... Cornwall and area; and

“Whereas residents do not have a say in the procurement and administration of meals and other services provided by the facility, nor can they opt out of such services when notified of an increase in charges, being thus committed to a ‘take it or leave it’ choice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) To instruct the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations ensuring fairness, protection and choice for residents of long-term-care facilities that provide any other necessary service such as, but not limited to, meals and personal assistance at extra cost to their residents;

“(2) To instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities with respect to the provision of services other than lodging that involve an extra charge to residents.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to Meher.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“Whereas Ontario’s youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

“Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

“Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

“Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding.”

I support the petition, will affix my name and send it to the Clerks’ table via Renée.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**STRONGER WORKPLACES
FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014****LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION
DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE
D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE**

Mr. Flynn moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / *Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Flynn.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today for third reading of Bill 18.

Before I start, I want to thank the fine new member for Barrie, who I have the privilege of having as my parliamentary assistant, for the work that she has done on this bill to date. I would also like to thank all members and the Chair and the Clerk of the Standing Committee on General Government for working very, very hard the other evening to report this bill back to the House for its third reading.

The bill we have before us, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, will, if passed by this House, protect our province's most vulnerable workers, and it's going to increase fairness for both employees and employers.

It's important to recognize at a time like this, when a bill comes forward for third reading, that it doesn't come forward out of nowhere, that people have worked really hard to make sure that we have solicited the right type of advice at the right time. I really want to single out some people who have helped us along the way on this bill: the Law Commission of Ontario. The United Way of Toronto provided very, very important reports on this topic themselves. Our government is going to continue to move to better protect all of our workers. I think these groups want to be a key part of that and have said they are going to be.

I also want to take some time to say a very personal thank you to the Workers' Action Centre and their allies, the people they work with and for. These people actually walk the walk. While they help individual workers, they also take on a crucial advocacy role for those workers as a group. They pushed for a very long time for policy changes, Speaker. They want policy changes that help vulnerable workers in our province, and this bill takes what I think are some very important steps in that direction.

Sometimes when I see the Workers' Action Centre and their work, I wonder how they keep pressing on. Some of the issues they deal with are issues they would have liked to have seen changed a long time ago. But I hope they can look at this bill—I hope they can look at certain portions of this bill—and be very proud that the work they've done has indeed made a difference and has

made it into proposed legislation that is going to help all workers across this province.

I think one of the main features of this bill is the annual increase we will be seeing to the minimum wage, based on the consumer price index. This increased amount will now be announced in April of each year, and it will come into effect a few months later, in October of the same year.

1600

In the past, increases to the minimum wage have been made on an ad hoc basis. They were subject to politics. They were subject to the whim of the party of the day, basically. But that will change now, Speaker, if this bill passes. Workers and businesses will finally have that certainty on the minimum wage that they've been asking for, and to see it in place for the first time, I think, meets with the approval of a vast majority of employers and employees.

This decision wasn't made lightly. It was made after a very extensive consultation process that was undertaken by the minimum wage panel. The panel, during its deliberations, heard from more than 400 individuals and organizations. They heard 92 in-person presentations and 340 submissions. The result, I think, is a more consistent, a more transparent, and a much more fair approach to setting Ontario's minimum wage.

We all know and hear that vulnerable and precarious work is increasing in the province of Ontario. We've all seen the reports. This often includes employment where workers are in temporary jobs for extended periods of time, and sometimes those temporary jobs don't offer the prospect for work that employees would like to see.

So what the proposals in this legislation respond to are key recommendations and recent reports from our stakeholders. What they include—some of the changes you will see, Speaker, in the bill—is the elimination, for example, of the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages through the Ministry of Labour and increasing the period of recovery from what is now six and 12 months to two years for employees, and making employers who use temporary help agencies liable when the agencies themselves don't pay up with certain types of wages.

It will also extend the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It will include coverage now for unpaid co-op students and some other unpaid learners—legal unpaid learners, I might add. It will also prohibit employers from recovering certain costs.

It's amazing to think that this still goes on in this day and age, but it would also now prohibit employers from seizing personal documents, such as passports, from foreign employees. We do this by extending the application of the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act. That will now cover all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or any other foreign temporary employee program that we might have.

We know that the world of work is changing. The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to, five years later, in 2013, a figure of 133,000. We believe that all Ontarians will

agree that it's proper and it's compassionate to extend that same coverage to foreign workers.

We all know people in our ridings, people in this province, work very, very hard, and they expect and they deserve to be paid for the work that they do. But currently, employees can only recover up to \$10,000 through the Ministry of Labour under the legislation we have in place today. So what we're proposing is to make it easier for employees to get the money that's owed to them. We're proposing to remove the \$10,000 cap that applies to orders for unpaid wages that are issued by the Minister of Labour under the Employment Standards Act. That means employees would no longer be forced to pursue larger claims through the court system, for example. That's going to save employees and employers a lot of time and a lot of money that should rightfully be going to the employees themselves.

If passed, our legislation would also increase the time limit for the recovery of wages. Those wages are recovered through an order to pay under the Employment Standards Act. We think it should be two years.

The committee that reviewed this bill agreed to speed up the implementation of these changes from six to three months so workers can start to benefit from them a lot sooner.

I'd like to express my admiration and my thanks to the Ministry of Labour operations division, for finding a way to be ready to help workers under these new rules and on a much tighter timeline. Their hard work is appreciated by everyone that's involved.

Our proposed legislation would also require employers to provide information on employment standards through a poster in the workplace, so that employees can better understand the rights that they have under the act.

We know that people often come to this province and this country from all corners of the world, and often English isn't their first language. When they enter the world of work in Ontario, often, to make them properly aware of the rights they have in Ontario as employees, translated posters have to be provided. What we're saying is that the translation should be provided in any language requested by the employee if it's one of the languages—I think it's 26 and growing—that is provided by the Ministry of Labour.

The legislation we have before us would help better protect employees who choose to be employed by temporary help agencies. We have decided that the best way to move forward on this, and what we're proposing to the House, is that we establish joint and several liability between the agencies and their client businesses when the agencies fail to pay certain types of wages. Client employers who use temporary help agencies would be liable for regular wages, for overtime pay, for public holiday pay and for premium pay if the agencies themselves don't or refuse to pay up.

Additionally, we originally proposed changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act experience rating system. However, Speaker, a lot of time has passed since this bill was first introduced; it was almost a year ago. It

didn't pass in the last Parliament due to delays. The situation has changed since then. The WSIB is currently itself now undertaking a rate framework review, which also includes a review of the same experience rating system. We expect the WSIB will make decisions regarding these changes just around the same time next year.

As a result, it did not make sense to legislate, and then implement, changes to a system that may or may not exist in its current form in the very near future. Therefore, I'm glad the Standing Committee on General Government changed schedule 5 of this bill to a regulatory authority, so when the time comes to act in the future, we can indeed act.

Speaker, all workers should expect that when they go to work they will return home at the end of the day safe, healthy and having earned some money. That's why our bill, if passed, would extend coverage of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to unpaid co-op students and some other unpaid trainees and learners. We need to ensure they have the same individual rights and the same protections that are afforded other workers in this province.

In order to proactively protect the rights of employees, our proposed legislation would also give the Ministry of Labour the authority to require employers, when ordered by the ministry, to conduct self-audits to make sure they are in compliance with the Employment Standards Act. The intent of this proposal is to provide a tool that promotes and encourages compliance with the Employment Standards Act and is going to extend the program's reach in a very significant way and in a way that's very efficient and is very cost-effective.

Speaker, we all know that construction is a key driver of Ontario's economy. That's why we're strengthening the Labour Relations Act. It's the cornerstone of what we believe is a fair and a balanced labour relations system. We're proposing to reduce the collective agreement open period in the construction industry from what is currently three months to two months. This will allow skilled workers to spend more time building the roads and the bridges and the schools and the hospitals that grow our economy and to ensure we have a very prosperous Ontario for many generations to come.

The proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, but it also levels the playing field for those Ontario businesses that do treat their workers well and treats them in a way that we would all agree we would like to be treated. They have a right as a business to not have to compete with those who choose not to follow the rules. It puts businesses on a level playing field, Speaker. We think that is fair.

1610

Our government is investing in infrastructure, it's investing in skills training and it's investing in second careers as the world of work changes. We're securing investments from abroad that will create hundreds of new jobs in this province. But most importantly, we're

investing in our people. We're investing in the people of this province because, at the end of the day, they are the real wealth of this province.

We can and we will build our economy. At the same time, though, this bill enables us to work together to protect the most vulnerable in our society. I would urge all members of the House to support this bill on third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

M. Taras Natyshak: Comme toujours, ça me donne un énorme plaisir de participer dans ce débat, le débat de la troisième lecture du projet de loi numéro 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

It is, of course, a pleasure to debate and to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, one that deals with several provisions under several different areas of labour law and employment standards. For the benefit of members who are in the House today and maybe some who haven't had the ability or the opportunity to review the bill in some time, I'll give a quick little recap as to what the bill does and how New Democrats attempted and proposed the bill to be stronger.

First, the bill extends damages that an employee can recover from an employer. It replaces the current six-month cap on back wages with a two-year limit while also removing the \$10,000 cap on damages for unpaid wages. The changes will allow the workers to recover a greater proportion of their actual lost wages when employers have violated the Employment Standards Act over an extended period of time.

Of course, New Democrats support—I'll say, firstly, that we support this bill. We see it as a couple of small measures to be able to enhance the livelihoods of workers, and particularly vulnerable workers, in the province. But we have attempted to make the bill stronger to make sure that those protections were far-reaching and well known in the broader public.

Back to the ability for workers to recover damages in excess of \$10,000: I think no one in this House could ever argue that if an employer owes you more than \$10,000, you shouldn't have the legal right to be able to seek out those damages in excess of \$10,000. We see that as something that is matter-of-fact and something that makes complete sense. However, there are certain provisions and certain areas where employees are prohibited to seek damages. New Democrats attempted to make that stronger. We proposed that client companies be jointly responsible for all monetary and non-monetary entitlements under the Employment Standards Act, not just wages and overtime. That would have gone a long way in sending a message that what's fair is fair. What you're owed is what you should be paid, under all rights under the Employment Standards Act.

The government met us halfway there, and we found some compromise—I guess, not really, because they have a majority on committee, so there wasn't really any

compromise. They just voted down our amendments to the bill and went halfway, as I said, to extending those damages. Holiday pay will now be one of the recoverables. At least, I guess, that's something that we can say will be an enhancement.

Bill 18 increases the minimum wage by the rate of inflation each year and sets up a process for reviewing the minimum wage every five years. We know that the government introduced a bill prior to the election of this year to raise the minimum wage on June 1 of this year. They did that. This bill sets in place the mechanics to raise that minimum wage at the rate of inflation.

New Democrats proposed a different idea. We proposed a two-step phase-in of \$12 an hour, where it would be palatable not only for our small business community, who wouldn't necessarily be able to make those, in adjusting their small business tax rate by half a point at the same time that each 50-cent increment was put on to the minimum wage.

It was a quid pro quo and something that I think resonated in the small business community. They know there are matters of income inequality. They also know that when, particularly, lower-wage earners have more disposable income, they tend to spend more money. There's a direct correlation and a benefit to paying workers more money, especially in smaller communities in rural Ontario, but I guess it would be the same in any community.

We know that the glaring income inequality that has been growing not only in this province but across the country is something that Legislatures in every region have to address. With this measure that the provincial government has enacted, it is a small step, but of course New Democrats believe we could have gone further.

Speaker, the bill also requires that temp agencies have new record-keeping and joint and several liability responsibilities for temp agency workers. Another matrix of an explosion of job insecurity, income inequality—where we see temporary work agencies absolutely take over what historically would have been a labour market where you would just be directly hired from employers. We see temp agencies filling the gap and playing a role not really in enhancing the lives and the opportunities of workers but simply providing a mechanism for cheap, expendable and almost disposable sources of labour.

I could tell you about incidents in Essex county where folks get hired through temp agencies and 89 days later they are fired, they're terminated, their contract is revoked, they are no longer needed. "Go to the back of the line and try to find some more employment." It is very unfortunate that the government has allowed these temp agencies to proliferate in our communities and our economy, because they add no tangible value.

The bill requires temp agencies to keep records on who is actually there. It also requires joint and several liability in terms of the responsibilities between the employer and the temp agency, as to who enforces and who is liable under the Employment Standards Act and its compliance. We think that's a good measure. We think it shouldn't be either/or. They should both be

responsible, as they are the ones who are requiring this labour.

Speaker, there's a provision for new information disclosure posters and self-audits. It requires the distribution of an employment standards poster to every employee and adds another tool, the employer self-audit. We agree with the employee poster. I think everybody should be informed as to their rights and responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act. But when it comes to the employment standards branch having the power to order an employer to conduct a self-audit, I have some reservations.

I'm recalling our committee work just a couple of days ago. Because the bill was time-allocated, which also meant that the committee was time-allocated, we didn't get to hear a lot of testimony from deputants, but what we did hear was certainly shocking. We heard of violations of the Employment Standards Act. We heard of temporary agencies that continue to take advantage of workers, that are in violation. There are really no regulatory or enforcement provisions to help these workers, so they are, of course, happy to see some movement on the front.

But when it comes to the employer self-audits, I question how that will actually play out. If you mandate an employer self-audit on their compliance with the Employment Standards Act, they're essentially filling out their own report card. I've said it before, Speaker: If I was able to do that during my educational career, I would have been a straight-A student and had perfect attendance. Unfortunately, that's not my record. I fear that there will be no real teeth to identifying and remedying employers who are not in compliance with the Employment Standards Act.

Speaker, the bill introduces new protections for foreign nationals working in Ontario by extending protections for live-in caregivers in the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act to other foreign nationals working or looking for work in Ontario, such as temporary foreign workers. Of course, due to the policies of the federal government, who have promoted the expanded use of temporary foreign workers not only in Ontario but across the country, we have seen, again, a proliferation of temporary foreign workers come into the country, where they're filling job vacancies in all facets of our economy, in all industries and in all sectors—not that that's wrong; that's great. Of course, we welcome folks to come in and to play an active role and to seek gainful employment. That's fine. But there are no regulations on them. They're under the radar, especially specifically in the migrant worker community and those who work in the agricultural sector. We don't know who they are. We don't know what their conditions are. There's no reporting mechanisms. Employers are certainly obligated to fulfill the basic standards set out by the province and the feds; however, we don't know. So this bill attempts to—

1620

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This bill protects foreign nationals from incidents where they would be charged recruiting fees, and sometimes some of their personal documents would be taken from them. As a matter of fact and as a measure of human decency, we should prohibit that, and this is what this bill does.

However, at committee, we heard testimony from folks who are family caregivers, who are foreign caregivers, who, despite this mechanism already being in place to protect foreign caregivers, still know of incidents where recruitment fees are being charged and people are being prohibited from working without these types of parameters, without people taking their documents and levying charges against them, making them seek out loans to even apply for positions as foreign caregivers.

So my question—and our question throughout the committee—was, what enforcement mechanisms is the ministry willing to enact and to put into place to protect the broader umbrella of workers who will be under this provision? There was no answer there. We would expect, or can expect, simply, that the status quo will prevail, and more foreign workers will fall through the cracks, and this provision of the bill will be shallow in its effect. It is definitely a concern that we heard at committee, and one where, again, the government infuses no measure of confidence—in me, at least—that they will fix that problem.

The bill changes the definition of “worker” in the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include people who are performing work for no pay, such as unpaid trainees, commonly called unpaid interns. It closes a loophole in the Occupational Health and Safety Act that protects only workers who are paid.

Again, of course, if you're working in the province of Ontario, if you're performing work at a registered business, you should be protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We've seen too many young workers, vulnerable workers, who have embarked on unpaid internships—we've seen two just this year who have died on the job. Speaker, I think this is definitely a point where we can all agree: If you're working in the province of Ontario, you should be covered under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and educated and given the resources to know your rights: know that you can refuse, know that you can participate. The rights are clearly outlined for workers. I think that is an important component.

However, why is it that we have to deal with this? You would think in a developed, in a mature, in a First World economy such as Canada's—we have such a problem that we have to talk about unpaid workers. You would think this was the Third World, with people just going to work and not being paid at all and not being covered under any provisions.

Even today, we came to learn that there's such a prevalence of unpaid work and that it's become such a norm in our day-to-day economy that the Bank of Canada governor, Stephen Poloz, suggested that young workers seek out more unpaid work. That's his solution to—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I did not hear that in the Economics 101 courses I took at university: “If you want to stimulate an economy, start working for free.” Unbelievable. It’s shocking, and I hope it sends some shockwaves through the Bank of Canada governor’s office that he should give that a little bit of second thought. We don’t agree with that.

Some days I wonder, and I wish that every member of this House worked a couple of years at minimum wage or, even better, do your job as an unpaid intern. See how long you last. Just gain some experience. It’s a valuable experience in here, Speaker. Come and sit here, and do it for free. We’ll see how quickly things change in the economy. We’ll see how quickly rules get changed. We would see. I don’t think that would ever be the case.

Interjection: Especially if you had to work at heights.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Especially if you had to work at heights, Speaker. You know—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I think I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member for London West.

There are just two—three more, actually. The bill reduces the open period for decertification in union raids in the construction industry from three months to two months at the end of a collective agreement. Having worked in that universe as an organizer and as a training director for my union, LIUNA Local 65 in Windsor, I understand the nature of certification and open period and raids. I think this is common sense. It actually is supported by the business community as well as labour. If you’re not ready for the two-month open period, if you can’t get the job done in terms of signing up new members or having them switch over to your union, then you probably don’t deserve to represent those workers in the first place. So that’s not a really big issue. It is surprising that it is in this bill.

Speaker, number 7, as I have it, amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to clarify responsibilities for workers. Now, you heard that this provision was rescinded from the bill; they removed this provision, which was previously under schedule 5, that deals with the experience rating system under WSIB, under the WSIA when it comes to the transaction or the employment contract between workplace temp agencies and workplaces. We’ll see if that gets done.

The minister had some comforting words that that should be all fixed within a year, but I’m not certain if it isn’t just buckling to the business community, who really don’t want any responsibility for the worker on their side, under temporary worker arrangements. So I would ask members of the government side—if you’re not a minister, or whatever—to take a look at this provision, because you’re going to leave workers more vulnerable if that provision isn’t remedied.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the bill was time-allocated. I think we’re seeing a trend in this building

where the government decides that no longer is this place the building and the arena for public purview and public discussion. They are using their majority to quash extended debate and full debate. They time-allocated this bill so that we had the least amount of time to debate it that we possibly could. I don’t think that can be good for our democracy. I certainly don’t think it can be good for the full review of a bill, and to gain as much insight and information as we possibly can.

I’m disheartened that that’s the approach the government is taking. I hope and wish that some members of the government stand up at some point and say, “Hey, we’ve got four years here. Let’s at least take our time; let’s not rush through things. Let’s ensure that we get it right, and let’s ensure that we talk to as many people as we possibly can.” In their haste, I think they’re making a tremendous mistake. They’re missing an opportunity to actually fix issues.

This bill is a half measure when it comes to supporting workers, although we agree that some of them certainly will be beneficial. The minister talks about labour relations in the province of Ontario, and this is their measure: to reduce the open period from three months to two months—30 days. That’s what they’ve done. That’s the only tangible effort they’ve taken in, I guess, a positive step. I mean, we’ve seen them enact Bill 115; we’ve seen them work to quash teachers’ contracts in the province of Ontario; we saw in the previous session where they were looking to open up collective agreements for workers to be able to give EllisDon a big bonus. They’ve certainly been able to work backwards, but when it comes to progressive labour legislation, this is what we get: 30 days. The raid period is condensed to 30 days.

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I wonder, and I doubt, again, if we’ll ever see tangible labour relations progress in the form of anti-scab legislation that would stop strikes and violence at job actions, and card-based certification, giving workers in this province the ability to join and organize and be represented by a union without fear and without the repercussions that come in a certifying effort.

Speaker, I’m pleased and happy to have added some comments to this debate. New Democrats are supportive overall of the direction, as we see the majority of it as being small, positive steps. However, we certainly proposed a different approach.

Thank you, Speaker, and I cede my time to my colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I’d like to direct a few comments to the Minister of Labour on Bill 18. At the delegations that came to the committee last week, it was very clear and very evident that the minister and his ministry did not get the bill quite right. That is often the case when you are hasty to alter public policy, and haste is more important than quality in this case. It was clear from the representations that the ministry’s change with self-audits under the Employment

Standards Act is clearly a foolhardy manoeuvre at best, will do nothing whatsoever except add additional time and cost to people and will actually encourage and incite people not to be forthright in their dealings with the Ministry of Labour.

Also, the joint and several liability changes with regard to temp agencies: again, another poorly-thought-out and hasty modification which will have significant negative consequences to many people.

Finally, the WSIB changes, with that joint and several liability: missing the boat. It would have been nice if the minister had heard those representations directly. Maybe he would have been supportive of a number of the amendments put forward by the third party and ourselves. But once again, under a time allocation motion and a majority government, the government is acting in a reprehensible and atrocious manner, not just with regard to listening to the perspectives and the concerns of other members of this House but reprehensible in their actions in that they disregard the legitimate, thoughtful concerns expressed by others in those public representations.

Minister, this is not a laughing matter. I know that the Deputy Premier and the Treasury Board secretary thinks it is a laughing matter; I don't. There are people who are going to be facing and dealing with the consequences of Bill 18, and they won't be laughing. When people have greater difficulties with WSIB, when they have greater difficulties with shared responsibilities and complicated and convoluted liability responsibilities, they won't be laughing. Maybe the Treasury Board secretary will be laughing; maybe the Deputy Premier will be laughing. But I know that when I get people coming into my constituency office who are facing injustice, facing bureaucracy in the lack of decisions, I don't laugh at them. I take their concerns with seriousness and endeavour to fix them up.

This bill was brought forward in a hasty manner, completely—all parties agreed to support it; at second reading we did support it. We did also clearly communicate to all House leaders that we were willing to give somewhat rapid passage to Bill 18, but with some thoughtful considerations by the public deputations, and with thoughtful amendments. All those good-faith measures put forward by the two opposition parties were dismissed in a very cavalier and reprehensible manner by this Liberal government.

We have a shortened time frame: Two hours of debate at third reading for a bill that will, I will say, affect everybody in this province, either directly or indirectly—employers, employees, everybody will be affected. And this government views two hours as adequate to ventilate and understand the concerns and the interest—two hours for a bill that will affect 13 million people.

I've seen first-hand, and I think everybody has seen first-hand, but very much emphasized with this new government: It is easier for these fellows to pass a bill that affects 13 million people—and faster to pass a bill that affects 13 million people—than it is to get a health card or a driver's licence in this province. It's a cumber-

some, slow process to get a health card, but we can pass a bill in two hours. If only our administration of justice was as fast as our legislative arm, maybe we would get the horse and the cart in the right order. Take our time—thoughtful deliberations—when we develop policies, legislation, take our time on the legislative side, and maybe we would have a more expedient administrative side.

We are continuing down the same faulty path, and it's exacerbated now with a majority government who says one thing in one mandate letter and whose actions truly and infinitely betray the words that they put in their mandate letters.

Again, I think it's reprehensible and undignified for a Legislature, in its first week back, to start bringing in time allocation motions on such important bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to join the debate today on behalf of the people I represent in London West. Certainly the bill that we are debating here, Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, is an important piece of legislation, not just for Londoners but for people across this province.

I want to say up front, just as my colleague did, that we in the New Democratic caucus will be supporting this bill. We supported it at second reading and we will continue to support it through third reading.

There's no question that strong workplaces are the absolute foundation of a strong economy, and we agree that this bill does take some valuable, although relatively modest, steps toward strengthening workplaces and improving workplace protections for workers.

But let's be clear: This is not a game-changer for vulnerable workers. The bill will not fix the problems that were documented so thoroughly in the law reform commission's report on precarious work, and it will not address the concerns that were brought to the committee during the single day that was set aside for public input on the bill by workers' advocates, who pointed out how very vulnerable precarious workers are and who highlighted the need for much more proactive enforcement by the Ministry of Labour, which currently has only 20 employment standards officers, who are responsible for hundreds of thousands of Ontario workplaces.

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Bill 18 is one of many examples of omnibus legislation that we're seeing more and more of under this majority Liberal government, one of many bills that string together a diverse package of complex changes to multiple pieces of existing legislation. In theory, there's nothing wrong with that, because sometimes it's necessary to amend different acts in order to get the kind of wholesale change that is needed. But when you combine omnibus legislation with time allocation, you risk circumventing the democratic process, because there is so much in the bill that it is difficult for the few MPPs who have had an opportunity to speak to it to address all the various provisions. The timelines were so short that

stakeholders had only a couple of days' notice to sign up for public input and to prepare their presentation. As I said, public hearings were limited to a single day. This made it very difficult for some of the groups who wanted to speak to the bill to participate in the democratic process, and it creates a real risk that some of the elements of the legislation have not received the kind of public scrutiny they deserve and the kind of scrutiny that the people in this province expect.

Some of the most significant changes that will result from this bill concern temporary workers and migrant workers. Indeed, many of the presenters who spoke to the committee about the bill focused on these two groups. We know that temporary work and other forms of precarious work have increased dramatically in Canada since the 2008 recession and the collapse of the manufacturing sector. There are estimates that as many as one third of all workers in this province work in precarious jobs, mainly low-wage, non-union jobs that do not provide a pension or other benefits, that make it hard to put food on the table, hard to find decent housing and hard to raise a family.

I'm not talking about low-skilled workers or workers with low educational attainment. In many cases, people in precarious jobs bring impressive educational credentials and diverse skill sets to the labour market, but they have been shut out of finding well-paid, stable employment. We're seeing a troubling rise in PhDs who are in precarious work, employed as contract faculty in Ontario colleges and universities, who are trying to pay off the huge debts they accumulated while going to school, teaching a course here and a course there with no job security, no benefits and no prospects.

But the two groups who make up the largest proportion of this new "precariat" are temporary workers and foreign workers. Not only is Ontario home to the largest number of foreign workers in Canada, but temporary work agencies are concentrated in this province; about 60% of temp agency revenues are generated in Ontario alone.

Under current law, the agency that places a temp worker is held responsible if that worker's rights under the Employment Standards Act are violated. There is no liability for the company that is employing the temp worker. Bill 18 introduces the concept of joint and several liability to make temp agencies and the client company jointly responsible for paying workers' unpaid wages. It also extends the time period for temp workers to file claims against employers for unpaid wages from six months to two years and removes the arbitrary \$10,000 cap on the amount that can be claimed. This is critical and speaks to the nature of temp work and the vulnerability of temp workers, since over 90% of temp workers have to wait until after they have left their job before they make a claim. They're worried that making a claim could jeopardize their employment.

We know that a 2013 inspection blitz of temporary help agencies found that 70% of the agencies inspected had monetary violations, usually unpaid holiday pay, so

New Democrats are certainly in favour of the amendment that was introduced by the committee that adds public holiday pay and premium pay to the list of items for which a client employer can be held jointly and severally responsible. We do feel, however, that the bill should have gone further by holding client companies jointly responsible for all monetary and non-monetary entitlements under the Employment Standards Act, not just wages and overtime. During the committee, we heard, "The complaints that we see more often are workers whose rights have been violated, and they are kind of stuck in nowhere land. For example, we have temp workers who are pregnant, and they're fired by the client employer, while the temp agency tries to pretend that they don't know anything about it." Temp workers who have been unfairly treated—illegally treated—by their employer should be entitled to the full protection of the Employment Standards Act. While Bill 18 will address some of the injustices experienced by temp workers, New Democrats believe that these provisions do not go far enough.

During public input, the committee also heard from temp workers who earned only half as much as their co-workers who were doing exactly the same job because they were employed by the company rather than the temp agency. This is just wrong, and it could and should have been addressed in this legislation.

Other changes that could have been considered in Bill 18 include:

- making sure that after a certain period of time, temp agency workers become direct employees of the client company and are protected from unfair dismissal by either the temp agency or the client company;
- requiring that agency workers must receive 80% of the total wages paid by the client company to the temp agency;
- limiting the proportion of temp agency workers in a company's workforce to no more than 25%, with an exemption for small businesses; and finally,
- requiring all temp agencies to have a licence to operate in Ontario.

Another amendment that was introduced to the bill, which is certainly an improvement over the original legislation, was a change to the transitional time for the new rules to come into effect. We would have preferred the act to come into force immediately. However, the amendment will at least allow temp workers to claim back wages three months after the bill receives royal assent, instead of having to wait six months, as was originally proposed.

The third amendment passed by the committee was to move the proposed changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act from a legislative mandate to a regulatory authority. Clarifying legislative responsibility for temp workers who are injured during a job placement by attributing costs to the employer where the injury occurred and assessing wages with reference to income earned by the agency was regarded as a positive step forward by workers' advocates. Research studies by the

Institute for Work and Health at the University of Toronto have shown that client companies frequently bring in temp workers when they do not want their existing workers to be exposed to hazardous and unsafe workplaces.

Holding client companies and agencies responsible for temp workers' injuries was an important step forward. We are concerned that moving it to regulation is totally at the discretion of the minister and removes the public from having a say in when that regulation will be passed and what it will contain.

The other section of the act that I wanted to address is the provisions that are designed to reduce wage theft. This is an obvious and much-needed improvement. We know that a recent Workers' Action Centre survey found that one in three workers in low-wage precarious jobs experienced wage theft in the last five years. Wage theft takes the form of unpaid wages and unpaid vacation pay or overtime pay, as well as employers' misclassification of employees as independent contractors or misclassification of unpaid interns as trainees.

Within the hospitality sector, employers who withhold tips and gratuities from their employees or who require their employees to forfeit tips and gratuities are engaging in wage theft. Essentially, they are stealing from their employees. Bill 18 prohibits tip-outs, which is a long-overdue measure and something that was raised by New Democrats in this Legislature on multiple occasions by the former member for Beaches–East York, Michael Prue.

The other section of Bill 18 that will contribute to reducing wage theft is the extended damages provision, which I already discussed in relation to temp workers, and also the new requirement for posting information about the Employment Standards Act in Ontario workplaces. Bill 18 requires employers to provide employees with a poster on their rights under the Employment Standards Act. But as one of the experts who spoke to the committee explained, there are limits on the effectiveness of posters. This expert said, "You could have all the international conventions and all the laws in Canada posted in every workplace, and I don't think it's going to make a difference if there aren't resources to enforce them."

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In addition, Bill 18 requires workers who want to see the poster in multiple languages to request for a different-language version of the poster. This may certainly be a barrier for a vulnerable worker who fears that if they come forward to ask about their rights under the ESA, they could be dismissed.

When I spoke to Bill 18 at second reading, I focused many of my comments on the sections of the bill that deal with unpaid workers, and I'm going to return to that section of the bill now.

Unpaid workers are typically students in high school, college or university work-placement programs, but they can also be trainees who are brought into the workplace under six very specific conditions that legally exempt their employers from paying wages.

From the perspective of these unpaid workers—these young people who are doing secondary school work experiences or post-secondary internships or field placements—the most important change contained in the bill is the amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to change the definition of "worker." No longer will an individual have to be paid to be recognized as a worker under the act. With Bill 18, unpaid workers will have the same rights as paid workers to refuse unsafe work, to participate in resolving health and safety concerns, to be informed of any hazards to which they may be exposed, and to be protected from reprisals if they exercise these rights.

Bill 18 is certainly a step forward from the patchwork quilt of health and safety protections that are available to students, which categorize young people into four basic groups, depending on whether their work placement is paid or unpaid and whether their placement is optional or a mandatory requirement for graduation. Bill 18 puts students who are unpaid on the same footing as those who are paid. Both groups of students will now be covered by occupational health and safety protections.

What Bill 18 fails to do is to address workplace safety issues for students whose placements are optional. Currently, whether they are paid or unpaid, all post-secondary students who are doing a placement that is required in order to graduate receive WSIB coverage from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, so they are insured if a workplace accident or injury occurs during the work placement. But students who are doing optional placements, whether they are paid or unpaid, do not receive WSIB coverage, and Bill 18 does nothing to address this discrepancy.

You can see the fundamental unfairness because of this application of WSIB, because who is to say whether a placement is optional or not? With youth unemployment double the provincial average, and young people desperate for any kind of relevant job experience, an optional placement may be considered the only way for a student to get ahead, to get that toehold in the labour market they are so anxiously seeking.

What Bill 18 also fails to do is to provide young people, whether they are paid or unpaid, with any assurance that their rights in the workplace will be protected. It fails to extend to these young people basic rights under the Employment Standards Act that all of us take for granted, such as reasonable hours of work, lunch breaks and leaves of absence.

More importantly, it fails to protect young people from exploitation as unpaid interns, when they are doing work for which they should be paid. I'm sure that all of us in this House know of young people who are working for free because they see no other option to get the experience they need to enter the career they dream of.

New Democrats believe that a much more proactive approach is needed on the part of government to educate and raise awareness among both employers and interns about interns' rights to be compensated for the work they are doing unless they meet the very narrow definition of "trainee."

We are calling for the publication and posting of an interns' bill of rights, not just the general ESA poster required in Bill 18. In addition, and more importantly, we are calling for employers to be required to meet with interns before the placement begins, to review interns' rights under the Employment Standards Act and to provide written notice to the ministry about conditions of work, length of employment, job description, hours of work and whether the act applies. Because right now, all we have is anecdotes. There are estimates that as many as 300,000 people across Canada are working as unpaid interns, but Ontario currently has no way of tracking how many young people are asked to work for free, usually illegally.

But perhaps the most critical omission from Bill 18 is the absence of an anonymous reporting mechanism to allow third party complaints about inappropriate or illegal conduct by employers. The last week has shone a spotlight on the realities facing unpaid interns, particularly if they are young and attractive women eager for a career in journalism who are doing an internship with a powerful and allegedly dangerous media personality. Interns need a mechanism to safely report being taken advantage of, or other inappropriate conduct, without having to risk their future career. This is essential if we are truly committed to protecting vulnerable workers.

New Democrats would have liked to see in Bill 18 an anonymous reporting mechanism, like the one that I proposed in my private member's bill, the Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable Workers Act. But sadly, this too is absent from Bill 18.

To wrap up, Speaker, my colleagues and I in the NDP caucus support Bill 18, although, as I have clearly set out, we believe that there were lots of opportunities for the government to have made it much stronger and to have offered some real protection to the growing numbers of precarious workers that we see in our economy.

We feel strongly that the bill should have received more public scrutiny. It should have received more opportunity for all of us, as representatives of the people who elected us, to comment on the bill, to bring forward concerns of our community about how the bill will impact our constituents.

We also believe that it should have had more time—much more time—for public hearings so that stakeholder organizations, and individuals who are affected by the bill, could have come and shared their personal stories with members of the committee. There was so much in this legislation that deserved that kind of scrutiny and that did not get the kind of input that would enhanced the bill, that would have strengthened the bill, and that would have offered much better and stronger protections for workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, I'm not going to speak for a great deal of time on this bill. I want to read into the record a letter that was sent to the Minister of Labour from the Ontario Business Coalition, because I

think it's very valid. I don't doubt that the minister got this letter. Maybe he knows about it. It does express some concern with this bill. I'll read it. It goes as follows:

"The Ontario Business Coalition (OBC) is writing to you regarding Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, and in particular, the proposed amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 (WSIA) that appear in schedule 5 of the bill.

"The OBC is the province's largest and most representative group of employer associations and individual companies that focuses exclusively on workers' compensation matters. Its membership includes employer associations from manufacturing, construction, petroleum products, retail, hospitals, long-term-care facilities, home health, and staffing services as well as schedule 2 employers. Collectively, we represent more than 80% of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's (WSIB) schedule 1 covered employment. OBC members are committed to an equitable and sustainable workplace safety and insurance system that serves the needs of employers and workers effectively and efficiently, and we are dedicated to proactively working with the WSIB and the government on the design, direction and administration of the province's workplace safety and insurance system. "Many of the companies represented by OBC require the services and workers provided by temporary help agencies to fill their time-limited needs, including manufacturing, construction, health care, hospitals etc.

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"The proposed amendments would fundamentally alter where costs of workplace injuries suffered by employees of temporary help agencies are applied. The bill proposes to shift the liability and full cost of WSIB claims from temporary health agencies, who pay premiums to cover their workers, to their client employers. As a result, the full costs of WSIB along with the additional administrative burden would be transferred to client employers, thereby impacting the client employer's WSIB costs. The shift in liability to the client employer means that the client employer may be faced with a surcharge or reduced rebate at the end of a year should a temporary help agency worker be injured, while the temporary help agency's record (the actual employer) remains clear. This is inconsistent with the first principles of workers' compensation insurance, given that the temporary worker is actually employed by the temporary help agency and the temporary help agency pays the WSIB premium.

"It's also important to note that there are provisions currently in the WSIA to allow the transfer of costs from one employer to another in the event of negligence.

"At a time when our economy is in a fragile state and employment growth is lagging, it's especially critical to understand that WSIB premiums are a tax against jobs. Despite the fact that the province's employers have been doing their part to reduce workplace injuries and claims, Ontario's workers' compensation premiums are among the highest of all Canadian jurisdictions. Proceeding with

these amendments does nothing to improve the lot of injured workers and moreover only further erodes Ontario's competitiveness and reinforces the perception that Ontario is a high-cost province and not a good place in which to invest.

"Given that WSIB has already done significant work on reforming its funding model and rate framework with extensive stakeholder input and has been working to ensure their funding targets (mandated by government) are met, it is imperative to remain focused and disciplined. The proposed amendments to the WSIA, we submit, are a distraction and an impediment to the progress already under way at the provincial compensation agency. Changes to WSIA need to be undertaken in a holistic and not an ad hoc basis.

"The proposed WSIA amendments have been reviewed from an actuarial perspective on behalf of the OBC by Mr. Ted Nixon, a workers' compensation specialist actuary, and his opinion outlining the implications of the proposed changes to WSIA is attached. This submission reinforces our concerns with Bill 18 outlined above.

"OBC strongly requests that the proposed WSIA amendments be removed from Bill 18.

"We greatly appreciate the careful consideration you give to our concerns and would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the issues we have raised. Our members look forward to hearing back with a favourable response."

This is written by Ian Cunningham, chair of the OBC.

This just reinforces our position that the consultation process in this bill was very, very short. I was at committee the other day, and it was just bang, bang, bang. We had so many people coming through with all these concerns that the government doesn't seem to be listening to, and here are people with much experience in this type of thing not being listened to. Certainly we had wished they had given us a chance to amend this bill to look at some of their concerns, but this government doesn't want to do that. They're pushing this through, as they've done other legislation, and certainly there hasn't been a fair consultation process.

That is the end of my presentation right now, and I appreciate the time. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to rise today and add to the debate of Bill 18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014.

This omnibus bill contains two pieces of legislation by the government in the last Parliament: Bill 146, which, of course, was the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2013; and Bill 165, the Fair Minimum Wage Act, 2014.

Speaker, Bill 18 is a mashing together of a bill dealing specifically with minimum wage with another bill dealing with issues related to employment and labour. I really don't understand the connection between these two formerly separate bills, and I'm a little concerned that by

forcing them together, it may in fact stifle debate. So early in the fall sitting, this government has given numerous examples of caring more for political expediency than adequate discussion and consultation.

It came up for second reading on October 20, just over two weeks ago. It was then sent to committee just last week, and here we are at third reading today. That simply isn't enough time to listen to adequate stakeholder input. Then again, Speaker, welcome to the world of a majority government that really doesn't want proper stakeholder involvement.

Prior to the 2014 election, I spoke to Bill 165, the Fair Minimum Wage Act. At that time, I outlined some of the concerns that I was hearing in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex. I will take time a little bit later in my remarks to touch upon some of these concerns.

First off, Bill 18 would prohibit employers from charging fees and seizing personal documents, such as passports, from temporary foreign workers. There are in fact a large number of seasonal workers in the agricultural industry in my riding, especially in the Leamington area. I'm sure that the responsible business owners of Chatham-Kent-Essex would not do anything like take someone's passport away, so I doubt that this section will have a tremendous impact on my riding, but it is a welcome protection for workers who we increasingly depend on in the province.

However, the migrant workers' alliance said that Bill 18 doesn't do enough to protect these workers. They claim that it still relies on a complaint-based model, which has proven to be ineffective at times for migrant workers. By looking at the best practices of provinces such as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and even Nova Scotia, they believe Bill 18 can in fact be strengthened.

The bill also seeks to create a self-audit. Under the proposed provisions, an employment standards officer, or an ESO, could also call on an employer to carry out a detailed self-audit and report the findings within a time period specified by the officer, while at the same time the ESO would maintain the authority to come in and do an inspection anyway, even after a self-audit is conducted. It sounds a little redundant, in my opinion. While I support the reining in of companies that don't play by the rules, I am at the same time concerned that this provision may open the door for problems down the line. This provision seems somewhat redundant, as I said earlier. If you aren't going to trust the self-audit, why demand employers to conduct an audit at all?

The other main component of Bill 18 deals with minimum wage. Instead of simply debating about a slight increase in minimum wage, perhaps we should be asking why Ontario is so overly reliant on minimum wage jobs. In 2003, as an example, only 3% of the province's workforce was earning minimum wage. Now that number has skyrocketed to a shocking 10%. It really has been a race to the bottom over the last 11 years.

The big businesses, the Walmarts and the McDonalds of the world, are not going to go under if the minimum wage increases. They'll just likely lay off staff if they

need to, but then again, they're certainly not going to be going out of business. The David versus Goliath narrative is an easy one to sell, so we often see minimum wage debates described as simply being big business versus minimum wage earners. While that is somewhat true, the reality is that most jobs come from small or medium-sized businesses.

Over the past decade, my riding, Chatham–Kent–Essex, has suffered its fair share of job losses. Large businesses like Navistar and Heinz are gone. They've left town. Navistar has been flattened; there is nothing there at all now. Many employees turned to small businesses for employment. I've heard from many of these employers that they can barely afford to continue to do business in the province of Ontario, and as you and I both know, Speaker, there are a lot of reasons why they can't. I've heard it countless times, while knocking on doors from Highgate to Ridgetown to Chatham and all the way to Tilbury and Leamington.

If Bill 18 is passed, increases to the minimum wage would be tied to inflation and announced by April 1 of each year and come into effect on December 1. Many of the business owners that I spoke with regarding the minimum wage increase are glad that future increases will be predictable—instead of arbitrary raises like the one that occurred in June, when the government hiked it to \$11 an hour. However, many of them would have preferred that the increases happen every two years instead of every year. This concern was most often voiced by small business owners with only a handful of employees, who were frankly worried about the future of their business. If that business goes under, Speaker, these people are out of work.

As responsible legislators, it is our duty and our job to do more than just merely look at the contents of a bill at face value. We need to look at the landscape around the bill and carefully consider the implications or unintended consequences of legislation. For a government that professes to be open, why force two bills together and limit debate and input from those the bill will, in fact, impact?

If this government is committed to improving Ontario's economy and lifting its citizens out of poverty, a hike to minimum wage is not going to be enough. They need more job opportunities to earn a good living, not

simply more minimum wage and vulnerable jobs. I think everyone, especially on this side, would agree with that statement.

Bill 18 is one that I will ultimately be supporting, but I'm concerned that the government's desire to put points on the board and quickly pass bills at the expense of meaningful input could keep this bill from being as effective as it could be. They're just not getting the input, and we need more of that. This is quickly becoming a trend so early in this Parliament, and it is one that I hope will not continue.

Thank you very much for the time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 28, 2014, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved third reading of Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a five-minute bell.

I have a deferral: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 18 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, November 6, 2014."

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Attorney General has moved adjournment of the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjection: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

Well, well, it carries.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1713.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
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Mike Colle, Grant Crack
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Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
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**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Joe Cimino
Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 6 November 2014

Jeudi 6 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning.
Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 3, 2014,
on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Wednesday, November 5, 2014, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Sandals has moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred
until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 3, 2014,
on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When this item of business was last debated, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka had the floor.

Further debate?

M. Gilles Bisson: C'est avec plaisir que j'ai une chance ce matin d'être capable de participer dans ce débat. J'ai besoin de le dire : les libéraux sont toujours les mêmes. Ils ont des beaux projets de loi avec des beaux titres qui parlent de faire bien des belles affaires. Mais quand tu regardes les détails du projet de loi, tu vois que les libéraux sont très bons pour communiquer un concept à travers un titre, mais quand ça vient à être capables de vraiment faire les changements qui ont besoin d'être faits pour faire ce qu'ils disent dans leur « bill », c'est une toute autre affaire.

Écoute, c'est très connu que ce gouvernement, sous M. McGuinty et puis à cette heure avec M^{me} Wynne, est un gouvernement qui était plein de scandales. On a vu ce qui est arrivé avec cyberSanté, avec les ambulances aériennes Ornge et avec les centrales de gaz à Mississauga et Oakville. Dans tous ces cas et d'autres—j'en passe—le gouvernement a été vu comme un gouvernement qui était non seulement incompetent, mais aussi comme un gouvernement qui avait des problèmes à, comment dire, faire des affaires d'une manière correcte.

Donc, on voit un gouvernement qui était plein de scandales, et là, on voit M^{me} Wynne qui dit : « Je suis une première ministre qui est différente. Oh, mon Dieu! Je vais faire les affaires différemment. Moi, je ne suis pas comme ce méchant M. McGuinty. Moi, je vais faire les

affaires d'une manière qui est transparente et qui inclut le public. Je vais avoir des conversations avec le monde. Vous allez voir que ça va être bien différent. »

Mais quand je regarde ce projet de loi, c'est la même affaire qu'on a vue avec M. McGuinty : un projet de loi qui dit une affaire, mais qui, franchement, ne marque pas sur les points du titre du projet de loi. Je vais regarder le projet de loi dans une couple d'instances. Et vous allez voir, j'ai de très belles lunettes, données par ma belle-soeur, parce que j'ai perdu mes lunettes. Je les ai cassées. Ça, c'est ce qu'on appelle en anglais « my cheater glasses ».

Vous allez voir; la première partie du projet de loi, c'est la question de la compensation pour les exécutifs qui travaillent pour le gouvernement dans leurs agences et à travers le gouvernement. On l'a vu à beaucoup de reprises : quelqu'un qui travaille comme président ou la personne qui est responsable d'une grosse agence provinciale et qui d'habitude, on va le dire, est payé une couple de 100 000 piastres. On a vu des instances où les personnes ont été payées jusqu'à 1,6 million de dollars de salaire, et où la personne précédente était payée bien moins que ça.

Parce que les libéraux sont très bons à prendre soin de leurs amis, hein? Quand ça vient à leurs amis, il n'y a rien comme de s'assurer qu'ils ont l'habileté d'enligner un peu plus d'argent dans le portefeuille. Et là, le public regarde ça et ils disent : « Écoute, ça ne tient pas debout. » On voit quelqu'un qui fait un salaire qui est très élevé et on ne reproche pas au monde de le payer ce qui lui est dû pour le travail qu'il fait. Mais quand tu vois que le salaire payé avant, dans les gouvernements précédents, était beaucoup plus minime que ce que les personnes ont présentement dans ces postes-là, tu te dis : « Il y a quelque chose de différent et de mal. »

Donc, sur ce point-là on dit que quelque chose a besoin d'être fait. Ma chef, M^{me} Horwath, la chef du NDP, a dit qu'on a besoin de mettre ce qu'on appelle des « hard caps » sur les salaires pour s'assurer qu'une personne qui travaille dans ces postes-là n'ait pas plus que le premier ministre, fois deux.

La première ministre est payée combien? Je pense que c'est environ 240 000 dollars par année de salaire. Je ne suis pas sûr à 100 %. Peut-être que quelqu'un peut me clarifier sur le montant exact. Mais on dit que si la première ministre ou le premier ministre est payé un salaire pour être capable d'être responsable d'un budget de 130 milliards de dollars, certainement une personne qui est responsable pour une agence avec des responsabilités très minimes comparées à celles du premier ministre—ça ne tient pas debout que cette personne soit payée quatre, cinq ou six fois plus que la première ministre. So, nous autres on a dit : « Pas plus que deux fois. »

Voit-on ça dans le projet de loi? Non. On voit de beaux mots qui disent qu'on va faire quelque chose pour limiter les salaires payés aux exécutifs de ces agences-là, mais quand tu regardes les détails, il y a assez de trous dans le projet de loi que si on mettait de l'eau dans le seau, toute l'eau tomberait. On pourrait payer cette per-

sonne-là ce qu'on veut selon la manière de ce projet de loi-là.

Sur le deuxième point du projet de loi, on voit, par exemple, que des personnes qui ont été congédiées de leur poste parce qu'elles ont fait quelque chose de mal—on voit ce monde recevoir des paquets de « severance » qui sont beaucoup plus élevés que ce à quoi on est habitué dans le secteur public ou dans le secteur privé.

0910

Écoute, moi, quand je travaillais à la mine, si je faisais une erreur et que mon « boss » arrive un bon matin et Gerry, mon « boss », qui était—comment est-ce que j'ai pu oublier son nom? Ça, c'est grave. Anyways, Gerry Savard, disons, arrive et dit : « Écoute, Gilles, tu ne fais pas un bon job. Tu t'en vas, je n'ai plus besoin de toi. » Il ne me donnerait pas deux ans de mon salaire pour m'envoyer parce que je n'ai pas fait un bon job. Il te paye le salaire qui t'est dû, puis tu t'en vas, tu as tes « severances », tes vacances et c'est tout.

Mais dans le cas des libéraux, on a du monde qui ont été payés deux fois leur salaire annuel pour partir parce qu'ils ont fait quelque chose de mal. Écoute : paye-moi 1,6 million de dollars, puis moi, je vais aller gâcher un organisme quelque part et ils vont me payer 3,2 millions de dollars pour l'avoir gâché? Ça ne tient pas debout. C'est stupide.

Est-ce qu'on voit quelque chose dans ce projet de loi qui va changer? Non, il n'y a rien là-dedans qui va changer.

It tells me that the government is yet again doing what they do. They put a nice, shiny title on a bill. It's called the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. If I read that, I'd think, "Man, this is great legislation. There's going to be transparency. There's going to be accountability." But there's no transparency and accountability in this legislation. This is nothing but window dressing; it's bafflelegab. It's exactly what the Liberals do best: "Let's tell you what we were talking about doing over here," but when you look over there, it's completely the opposite.

I just used the example of what happens with salaries when it comes to people working in agencies of the crown. You've got people who work at agencies of the crown who are being paid far more than what they would normally be paid if it had been under previous administrations, or as compared to other sectors within the economy. And what's worse is that if they do something wrong and get fired because they mucked up, they get severances that are worth as much as two times their annual wage. Listen, if I offered Sally who lives down the street from my place a job for \$1 million a year and I said, "If you muck it up, we'll give you \$2 million," she'll be running real quick to muck it up, if she can get the two million bucks and get the heck out. It's a silly system.

When we look at the bill, you would think that's being fixed. You would think, "Oh, my God. That is all taken care of because Kathleen Wynne says it's so. It's accountability and transparency." But when you look at the

details of the bill, we're still going to be able to pay those executives the salaries they're getting and they're still going to be able to negotiate those types of severances. That's not at all what the Premier has promised the people of Ontario by way of the title of this bill or what she talked about in the election. I think it is yet just another example of the duplicity of this government. They love to talk a good line, they love to say the right words, but when it comes to the actions, they do completely the opposite.

They're the Tories who are in a hurry. The Liberals will do things on the right wing that even the Tories wouldn't attempt to do. There are all kinds of examples of that. If you take a look at the privatization within the health system, there is more being privatized in the health system today by the Liberals than the Tories ever dreamed of doing under Mike Harris. There is more being privatized in the Ministry of Transportation when it comes to maintenance of our highways than even the Tories dared to do. There is more being privatized under the Liberals under energy and electricity than there ever was dreamed of even under Ernie Eves, who was talking about privatizing the whole thing. Even Ernie Eves backed down and got out.

So I say that the Liberals love to pretend they're a big, progressive party that is doing all the right things, but, Mr. Speaker, when you start to pull away the veil of what they're doing, they're Tories in a hurry. They do exactly the opposite of what they say. A good example, when it comes to transparency, is what they said in the last election. I think what Mr. Hudak did in promising to cut 100,000 jobs was not a very wise policy decision, public policy position, and certainly politically not very good for the Tory party, at the very least. But here's the point: The Liberals campaigned against Mr. Hudak on the 100,000 jobs that were going to be lost. If you take a look at their own budget, they're saying that 6% will be cut in each of the various ministries; and I would project that the revenues are not going to be as good as we think they're going to be in the upcoming months because of what we're seeing in the energy and resource sectors.

So the question goes to the Liberals: How many people are they going to lay off? I bet you we end up by the end of this, by way of attrition and direct layoffs, probably laying off about the same amount of people Mr. Hudak talked about in the last election. But yet these Liberals tried to make it look as if they didn't stand for that, they were completely the opposite. That is not transparency. That is just political baffle-gab; and it's politics, I think, of the worst kind because it makes people more and more cynical.

We wonder why we get 49% of the people coming to elections. I don't remember the exact number in the last election, but I remember that in the one previous to that 49% of the public voted in the provincial election—at least in my riding; I don't know what it was everywhere else. Part of the problem is that people look at that and they say, "Why should I be engaged in politics? They say one thing and they do completely the opposite."

If we're serious about providing accountability and we're serious about applying transparency to government, and we actually did what we said we were going to do, I think the public would be more engaged. I think the public would say, "Hey, I'm getting good value for my tax dollars that I'm giving the government. The government seems to be trying to do a good job"—whatever stripe that government might be—"of making sure there is accountability and transparency for decisions," but we're not seeing that.

A good example is what's happened in regard to the daycare bill that we're about to vote on later on this afternoon. We New Democrats are in favour of the bill that is being proposed. We don't think it goes as far as it should, and deals with the issues of daycare for most parents, but it's a step in the right direction. We're regulating parts of the daycare sector that need to be regulated; nobody argues that. But we asked a very simple thing. We said, "Listen, daycare is an issue across this province. It doesn't matter what community you live in." I don't care if you're from northern or southern Ontario, eastern or western Ontario, if you're a parent and you're looking for daycare, a lot of you have issues.

So why didn't we take the time, as suggested by us, the New Democrats, and the Conservatives, to actually take some time to send that bill into committee so that the public outside of Toronto—and in Toronto—can have their say about what they see in the daycare bill as proposed and what they think generally should be done around daycare? The government said, "We're transparent and we want to be accountable." Well, in this case they're transparent and accountable for two days in the city of Toronto. They're saying, "If you have an issue and you want to come and speak to this bill, come to the city of Toronto between 3:30 and 6 at night and between 6:30 and 9:30 at night, two nights, sometime in a couple of weeks from now, and you'll get to have your say."

What happens if you live in Cornwall, Ottawa, Sudbury, Timmins, Sarnia or wherever it might be? You have to either—"Well, maybe I'll watch it on the legislative channel, if I can find it." Depending on which committee room it is in, it may not even be televised live. And it's not going to be run in real time; you're going to have to stay up in the middle of the night to watch it. Maybe you can watch on the Internet if you're lucky and you have good enough bandwidth to see it. Or you're going to have to drive down to Toronto.

You know what? There's a huge province outside of Toronto. If you go to Kenora-Rainy River, my good friend's riding, and you go to Fort Frances, it's 1,600 kilometres from here. Who's going to jump in a car and drive all the way to Toronto from Fort Frances for a 15-minute presentation to a committee here at Queen's Park? You may feel strongly about the situation of daycare in your community if you come from Fort Frances, but my God, are you going to drive 1,600 kilometres to come here?

It's incumbent upon this Legislature to allow the committee to travel to some of these communities so at least

some people outside of Toronto can have their say. Was there any transparency? Was there any accountability? Mr. Speaker, the government just used its majority and said, “No, we know best. We’re Liberals. I’m Kathleen Wynne. I am the Premier. I know what’s good for Ontario. Here’s a bill and if you don’t like it, too bad. I’ll use my majority and I’ll just push this thing through the House by way of time allocation and I’ll send it to committee for a couple of days in Toronto—done.” I think that’s a bit arrogant. I was thinking that the Premier was serious in her word when she said that, in fact, she was going to engage with citizens and have real dialogue about the issues that face us.

I can’t think of an issue that is not as important to young families as is daycare. I talked about it the other day in the second reading debate. I’m a grandparent. Our daughters each have two children: a little boy and three little girls. There are two in each of the families. The ones who were in daycare are now out of daycare. They struggled in order to find some daycare spots. It’s very expensive. Luckily, our daughters and their husbands are doing well enough that they can pay for it, but they ended up in a private daycare because it’s hard to get into not-for-profit daycare; there are not enough spots available.

Clearly, there are parents who are struggling for daycare spots. What do you do if you’re not as fortunate as Natalie and Julie, our daughters, who make at least a decent wage, who can afford to pay the daycare? What happens if you’re working in a job that pays 12, 13, 14 bucks an hour and you might be the only bread-earner in your family and you have to pay for daycare? It becomes very, very difficult.

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So I say, this is not about transparency, Mr. Speaker. This bill is more about the government trying to be seen as doing something on an issue where people really want the government to do something. They have a big, shiny title: MPP transparency and accountability act. If you looked at the title, you would think, “Boy, that’s a good bill, because it’s all about accountability and transparency.” But when you look at the details, it’s not there.

One of the other issues we talk about is limiting the ability of lobbyists to do some of the things they’re doing now. First of all, I want to say up front that lobbyists are a necessary group of people in our system. You have to have professionals who work with organizations to do the work that has to be done to prepare them to lobby governments and opposition, to be able to move their agenda forward. That’s what lobbyists are. They shouldn’t be seen as a negative.

But we have rules here that allow the former Premier, Mr. McGuinty, who is working for an educational software company that his government gave money to when he was Premier. When he was Premier, his government gave money to this company to do work on some educational software—whatever it is they do in that company—and now Mr. McGuinty is hired as their lobbyist. I think the average person would look at that and say, “My God, is that right? Does it make any sense that the guy

who gave them money gets hired by the company that got the money?” It doesn’t look good on the surface.

There has to be some sort of mechanism where you can’t do that kind of thing, or at least have a real cooling-off period of a couple of years that you cannot be involved in something you were directly involved with as a government member or as a member of this assembly or as a Premier or as a cabinet minister. I’m not saying that an MPP who leaves this place couldn’t get a job as a lobbyist somewhere, but there have to be some sort of conflict-of-interest guidelines that say you can’t be lobbying on things that you were responsible for when you were in government, because it does look to the public, at least on the surface—it doesn’t smell well, I guess, is the only way I would put it.

The other part of this bill is that they’re posting MPPs’ expenses. This is supposed to be something that’s really great. So we’re now going to post the expenses of myself and all of our colleagues when it comes to the two budgets we have: We have one budget to run our constituency offices, which we call our global budget, and we also have our travel expenses. We get money to travel to and from the riding.

So a person like myself, I take an airplane ride once a week. The government pays for that, including the taxi. They’re saying, “Look at this. We’re going to be posting it. It’s such a wonderful thing.” It was information that was already available to anybody who wanted to find it. It was already on government websites. All we’re doing is making it a little bit easier for people to find. But let me tell you: People in my constituency who are looking for how much I spend on travel or in my global budget, as with every member in the assembly, never have a problem trying to find that, because your local papers right away will publish what it is that you spent the year before. Normally, there’s an article that is written about how Gilles Bisson is either the highest- or second-highest-spending member when it comes to travel. Normally, Kenora–Rainy River is number 1 and I’m number 2 or I’m number 1 and Kenora–Rainy River is number 2. Well, you know, surprise, surprise: My colleague and I live far away, and we take airplanes to come to work because we’re more than eight hours’ drive.

In your case, how many hours’ drive would it take you to get here? Two days?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Twenty-one.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, it would take two days of driving. Well, excuse me, you’re not going to drive four days to come to work for a four-day workweek at Queen’s Park when we’re sitting. You’d be missing a day. So, of course she’s going to fly, and of course I’m going to fly.

To me, it’s a little bit silly. Everybody knows how much I spend every year, but somehow this is seen as transparency because it’s in the bill. It was already public information. It wasn’t as if nobody could find it. All you had to do was go to the legislative website, go searching around and you can find the report that lists how much each and every member in this assembly charged in travel and how much we charge in our global budgets to pay our staff and buy paper and pay rent.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I say this is a case where the government is saying they're going to do one thing, when it comes to having a really nice title that says it's transparency and accountability, and be seen as doing something, but in fact the details leave a lot to be desired.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Yvan Baker: The other day when I stood in the House, when I followed Minister Matthews as she presented this bill, I was very proud, and I'm proud to stand here again in support of this bill. It's an important bill; it's an impactful bill. We are not just talking about accountability; we are doing something about it and strengthening it.

During the election campaign I was knocking on doors and spoke with many constituents. Many of them talked about the need to make sure that government is accountable, that it's transparent, that we get value for taxpayers' dollars. I know from my experience in business and in the private sector that one of the best ways to ensure value for dollars is that the information that shines light on how we spend those dollars is so important. Having access to that information and making sure that's available to all concerned, and easily accessible, is important. That's what this bill strives to do.

This is a signature bill, Mr. Speaker. It's a broad-ranging bill. I believe it's an impactful bill. It's going to do a number of things. I would just like to reiterate some of the highlights of what the bill does.

It enables the government to directly control compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector. We're going to gather the information we need to make sure that we make an educated and responsible decision about public sector executive compensation, and then we can impose the right frameworks to make sure we control that compensation.

It expands the Ontario Ombudsman role to include municipalities, school boards and universities.

It requires expense information to be posted online for cabinet ministers, for parliamentary assistants, for opposition leaders, their respective staff and all MPPs. I think this is important. I think the people of my community and all our communities expect no less.

It requires all institutions covered by the provincial municipal freedom-of-information legislation to securely preserve and prohibit the wilful destruction of records, to make sure that information will always be present and available.

It gives the government greater oversight over the air ambulance service providers.

It allows the government to appoint a patient ombudsman to respond to complaints and to eventually help to make changes to improve our health care system.

It's a broad-ranging bill, Mr. Speaker. It's an impactful bill. We're not just talking about transparency; we're doing something about it. The people of Etobicoke Centre deserve this; I think the people of Ontario deserve this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have to commend my colleague for raising such important issues on this bill. I'll be joining in the debate as well, but I think it's important to note that there is a lot that the government is simply talking about, even in the bill. The bill is really, as we've described, window dressing. There is so much in the bill that was already happening, so much more that could have been done; really, it's a form of distraction.

For example, air ambulance: All the measures in this bill would not have changed anything. The government knew very well that there were serious problems going on. The government received an audit that they requested. They hired a company, Meyers Norris Penny, and had them do an audit. The audit clearly stated there were a number of problems. They received this document. I was in the committee; I was shocked at how exhaustive that report was. It went through and showed all the problems that existed—this is years ago; this was 2009, well before the scandal broke—and they did nothing about it. Really, what needs to happen are some systemic changes to the overall structure, the way in which this government responds to red flags, the way this government responds to problems.

Speaking about the Ombudsman, it's a great idea to expand the scope of the Ombudsman, but why is the government not expanding it to the area where there is so much in terms of scandal, like the health sector—eHealth, Ornge? These are some serious concerns, and particularly serious because health is something that everyone is concerned about. So why is this government appointing a patient ombudsman when we know very well that the Ontario Ombudsman is one of the most skilled individuals in terms of oversight? It's an office that has done great work.

This government, again, is not really implementing transparency. They're simply talking about it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Sophie Kiwala: Premièrement, je voudrais dire que mon français n'est pas parfait, mais je voudrais dire au membre de Timmins—Baie James que c'était important de répondre en français, dans le meilleur français possible.

Au début, je ne sais pas s'il y a un mot pour « bafflegab » dans le dictionnaire, mais bon. Le troisième parti a jeté plein de « criticism » sur ce gouvernement pour le projet de loi pour « transparency » et « accountability ». Enfin, c'est quelque chose dont je me sens très fière.

0930

C'est vrai que nous sommes prêts à faire quelque chose à propos de « accountability ». Nous avons fait une campagne électorale qui soulignait ce fait-là. Ce n'est pas quelque chose pour faire distraction. C'est une loi pour dire à nos commettants que nous sommes sérieux à faire un gouvernement ouvert.

I believe that we owe it to our constituents. I stand in this House confident that this is a principle that we will abide by. It's something that we are all very proud of. I

look forward to working together to see this bill passed into law.

There is nothing more important than accountability in today's government, and we owe it to our constituents on a daily basis, with every single act that we do in this House, whether it's our expenses online—we need to make them accessible to constituents. They shouldn't be hidden in the depths of a website. They should be accessible.

I'm proud of the work that this government is doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Gila Martow: Le membre de Timmins–Baie James a parlé en français. J'aime pratiquer mon français, alors c'est très intéressant. On devrait comprendre que c'est une grande province, comme il l'a expliqué. On a des membres qui viennent de localités qui sont très loin d'ici, à Toronto, et on devrait parler avec tout le monde dans cette province en deux langues sur tous les sujets. L'accountabilité, c'est très important pour tout le monde ici en Ontario.

We need to have not just talk, but we need to have real accountability. I think we're seeing that too many people don't even go to vote at election time. Why don't they vote? Because they're not engaged, because they hear the government say one thing and do something completely different. People are very disappointed.

It's up to us to communicate with the public. That's what we're here for. We're here to represent the public, not just at Queen's Park but across the entire province. We need to hear from the public. How can we hear from the public when, as the member from Timmins–James Bay has just said, people cannot be expected to fly in or drive for two days to come and give their opinion and share their opinion?

We need to have enough times where we reach out to the public. Video conferencing could be set up in these locations, at the bare minimum, so that people are able to come to their local community centre or town hall and speak to us in the committees through video conferencing.

All the communication networks are out there. The Internet now is making us so much more accessible, and it's disappointing to me to see that we're not using it more.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak on this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins–James Bay, you now have two minutes.

M. Gilles Bisson: Bien, premièrement, laissez-moi commenter sur l'utilisation du français à l'Assemblée. C'est très apprécié que mes collègues ont pris la chance d'être capable de répliquer à mon discours en français. N'ayez jamais peur de faire ça. L'une des députées de l'autre bord a débuté en disant : « Je ne parle pas trop bien le français. » Aucune différence : le point que la personne essaye et pratique le français, c'est l'affaire la plus importante.

Je veux faire un point sur ça. Quand on a un nouveau arrivé au Canada ou un francophone du Québec qui arrive ici en Ontario, puis il parle l'anglais, on ne s'inquiète pas s'il ne parle pas bien l'anglais. On essaye de comprendre ce qu'ils disent, et eux autres pratiquent et éventuellement ils apprennent l'anglais et puis ils deviennent plus courants. Un des problèmes qu'on voit dans le français des fois, c'est que les francophones, eux-autres-mêmes, vont entendre quelqu'un qui parle le français, puis parce que la personne ne prononce pas bien les mots ou a des problèmes à rechercher certains termes, ils vont la décourager d'utiliser le langage.

Moi, je prends l'approche complètement inverse. Utilisez votre français du mieux que vous êtes capables. Si vous avez des anglicismes dans le langage ou des mots que vous n'avez pas compris, en utilisant le langage et en demandant des questions, éventuellement, on devient plus courant. So, l'affaire qui est importante, c'est l'utilisation du langage et c'est quelque chose qui est très important.

Again, thanks to my colleagues for replying in French. I do want to say, though, that I really do see this bill as essentially a communications exercise on the part of the government. This is transparency and accountability by title; that's really what this bill is. It's not about the things that we need to do to really make transparency and accountability work.

As I said in my speech, and it was repeated by the member from Thornhill, in fact, people are disconnected and don't participate in politics exactly because politicians and governments tend to say the right things but take very little action on the things that they say they're going to do.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to address Bill 8. It is of course the curiously titled Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. I say "curious" as I don't think there has ever been a more clear example in this House of a government saying one thing and doing another. Perhaps one would say they're talking out of both sides of their mouths.

"Accountability" and "transparency" are two words with such importance when it comes to democratic governments, and certainly concepts that we on this side of the House support wholeheartedly. Yet these two words seem to lose all meaning when dragged through the mud by the Wynne Liberals. I feel it's important, as we move through this legislation, to understand just what accountability and transparency mean and how they apply when it comes to expected outcomes for this legislation under the current Wynne regime.

Let's take a clear look at these two words. We'll take "accountability" first. I have taken the opportunity to look it up, and according to Merriam-Webster, accountability is defined as, "An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions." Then they provide an example, which I will read as well, as it applies to this situation: "public officials lacking account-

ability.” I didn’t write that, Speaker, but it seems someone at Merriam-Webster must have a familiarity with this Ontario Liberal government.

So accountability is a “willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions.” I submit that this willingness is clearly absent in this House. I would advise that without that willingness to accept responsibility, there is no legislation wording that will restore the principle of accountability from a government whose actions continue to ensure it is not accountable.

Just in the last couple of weeks, we see this government, despite the announcements surrounding this legislation, moving again and again to ensure it cannot be held to account. Look at the legislation that is being rammed through this House at rapid, unaccountable speed. Let’s take Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014, where we just had one day of public hearings here in Toronto following time-allocated debate last week. Then one more quick day of clause-by-clause before it’s to be returned to the House and ramrodded through to shut down any sense of democratic input. How is this democratic? How is this accountable?

Last week it was Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. It’s the same story here, Speaker: time-allocated to shut down debate, one day of hearings here in Toronto to shut down input, one day of clause-by-clause to shut down amendments, and quickly back to the House. In the end, we’ll be left with neither stronger workplaces nor a stronger economy, but we will have a piece of legislation that says we do. Welcome to Premier Wynne’s Ontario, where government talks about doing the right thing but fails to walk the walk.

Talk is cheap, Speaker, and the people of Ontario deserve a government that tells them what they’re going to do and then actually does it. That’s what the people of Ontario deserve, yet we’re left with a government that brings forth snappy-titled legislation like the accountability and transparency act when its actions are clearly anything but accountable and transparent.

Of course, the fast-tracking of legislation follows hard on the heels of the government’s complete lack of accountability when it comes to allowing the people of Ontario a glimpse into the deals they’ve made to tie us to the white elephant known as MaRS, just out those front doors. Time and again, our members worked in committee to draw government out, to hold it to account on its MaRS dealing. Time and again, we were met with a solid brick wall of deniability.

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My colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington was persistent in his questioning in estimates, prodding the minister to simply provide the documentation, the agreements made by this government that have left Ontario taxpayers holding onto a multi-million dollar bill that I don’t even think government members know the total of. We’re still waiting for those documents, those agreements, while government hides behind their new buzzwords “commercial sensitivity” to keep the truth from getting out.

This is a project that has left us paying \$65 million to buy out an American real estate partner while also paying interest on a \$224-million loan issued by the province itself to get a second tower built in the first place. The minister wouldn’t even tell us how much we may end up paying for the project in the end. It’s hardly accountable, Speaker. And it makes me question the government’s intentions when it comes to inserting accountability into this legislation.

What about those gas plants? I don’t think there is anyone in the entire province who would consider this government’s actions in the wake of the Liberal gas plant scandal to be accountable. It’s completely the opposite, and the games continue. Seemingly emboldened by their new majority status, this government is doubling down on its unaccountability when it comes to the gas plant debacle. Where is the accountability when the government uses its majority to refuse the justice committee from hearing the testimony of Peter Faist and Laura Miller? All those in opposition stood in a united front to increase accountability with respect to the two cancelled gas plants while, of course, the government voted to shut us down. It’s more of the same cavalier attitude that cost taxpayers \$1.1 billion, all in the name of winning the 2011 general election.

You’ll have to forgive us in opposition for being skeptical of the government’s intentions when it puts legislation before the House with laudable principles of accountability and transparency while completely ignoring those principles when the rubber hits the road. The frustrating part for us in opposition and those across Ontario watching this play out is that it doesn’t seem to matter what legislation is in place to hold the government to account and ensure transparency. This government simply pays lip service and goes on its merry way doing what it wants when it wants and sticking taxpayers with the bill.

For instance, in the case I just mentioned—the government’s refusal to allow Mr. Faist and Ms. Miller to appear in front of a committee—their testimony would not have even been required if the government had behaved in accordance with legislation already on the books in the first place. You see, there was already legislation in place to protect public archives and public record-keeping before someone from government ordered the destruction of emails. Obviously, that legislation was completely ignored, so it’s questionable how the simple addition of another clause in this legislation is now going to protect future records.

You can change the legislation but a leopard or cheetah doesn’t change its spots. In fact, a number of different pieces of legislation to bring increased and enhanced accountability and transparency have been enshrined into law right here in this assembly, but they’ve all been ignored. After every scandal, it’s the same routine:

- (1) introduce legislation to make it appear like government and its agencies are finally going to do things right: be accountable, be transparent, provide proper oversight;
- (2) pass the legislation and announce all is right again, and the government can be trusted—don’t worry;

(3) wait until the people aren't looking and engage in the same unaccountable actions that got you into trouble in the first place—cue crisis;

(4) stir and repeat.

We had legislation to prevent an OLG-like crisis from ever happening again. Before you knew it, there was eHealth. Then eHealth crisis-prevention legislation gave way to Ornge, and Ornge begat the gas plants. The cycle just goes on and on, and at no time does it appear that this government actually gets it, actually understands what it is doing to prevent the very accountability and transparency that it pretends to defend. If it sounds frustrating, that's because it is. We have had more than a decade of this back-and-forth gamesmanship, and now we see the latest chapter with Bill 8.

Let's get back to the so-called accountability and transparency act. We have dealt with the accountability piece, or lack thereof, so now what about transparency? Again, when we flip through the Merriam-Webster, we learn that transparency is defined as "The quality or state of being transparent, free from pretense or deceit, characterized by visibility or accessibility of information, especially concerning business." These are all qualities we want to see in government, all qualities we should aspire to in this House, and while I support the initiatives towards transparency, I question once more the government's ability to make good on this goal.

I already told you about the MaRS questioning in committee. So, too, in the House during question period, we in the official opposition were stymied by a government and a Premier that simply refuse to be responsible, to be transparent. After the minister refused to release the business case for the MaRS loan and other relevant information related to the MaRS bailout in committee, Premier Wynne herself followed up in this House, refusing to release or even acknowledge that a business case existed that showed the MaRS phase 2 bailout of over \$309 million was in fact in the best interest of the Ontario taxpayers—they want to know.

This is a Premier that was supposed to be changing the scandal-plagued Liberal government, supposed to be ushering in a new era of openness and transparency. This is simply not the case. It makes me question the purpose of legislation like Bill 8 if it is going to be completely ignored once it's on the books, just like so many others in the past. I'm further concerned when I see members of this government—new members of cabinet who we hope aspire to be different when it comes to transparency—show that in reality it is the same old same old for a government that refuses to meet its responsibilities.

That concern was clearly front and centre again in estimates last week when we had the Minister of Transportation appear before the committee to answer questions on his ministry's plans moving down the road, a very important file as we continue to hear government make a pledge of \$29 billion to spend over the next 10 years on critical pieces of infrastructure—but I will remind them that they have been around for about 11.

This minister was asked for documentation, business plans and background material for issues, including high-

speed rail from London to Kitchener to Toronto, maybe even including Windsor, the UP Express—the high-speed electronic link from downtown Union Station to the airport—LRT and more. Yet, at every turn, he refused to provide the committee with requested documentation. Further, he refused to even provide timelines on projects for his government announcements that they've actually previously announced, indicating, "I'm not here to announce specific timelines or to make confirmations."

And here is where it gets a little strange. When I asked the minister to confirm the timeline announced by his predecessor for all-day, two-way GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo in five years, his answer seemed to indicate that Liberal commitments during an election are not commitments at all. Now, I don't want to mislead or put words into the minister's mouth so I will read his reply, and you can be the judge.

0950

He said, "You would understand, as a veteran member of this Legislature, that there are a lot of commitments that governments make, that parties make, that individual MPPs make that are aspirational in nature...." There it was, in front of the entire committee: an admission that commitments of this government are not actually commitments at all but in fact are aspirations—aspirations.

As I said in the House to follow up on that questioning, where we come from on this side, commitments are your word; they're your promise. Where we come from, there is of course a four-letter word for those who dress up their commitments as aspirations.

I put it to the members opposite: Here we are. After years of scandal, after years of legislation paying lip service to concepts of transparency and accountability, after one of your own cabinet ministers admits that your commitments aren't what they're made out to be, how are we supposed to believe you when you tell us that your latest for-sure, we-really-mean-it-this-time commitment to transparency and accountability is anything but another measure to divert the public's attention while you move on to your next scandal? And I'm sure it will be a good one.

How are we supposed to believe that this piece of legislation, as laudable as some of its goals may be, will end up actually instilling the principles of transparency and accountability instead of being ignored like the long line of ignored ethics proposals that litter the twisted trail this government has left for us to clean up?

I know there were comments earlier that talked about the Ornge scandal. We all saw, after the committee spent hours and hours and hours interviewing folks and coming up with a report—I'd like to specifically thank my colleagues, especially retired MPP Frank Klees, from Newmarket-Aurora, for his extremely great work on this file to bring and shed some light for Ontarians on just what happened at Ornge and how it got so bad.

But how careless the former Minister of Health was, when she was in fact warned, given a letter identifying all the red flags at Ornge. I'm not sure if she just has an inability to manage correspondence, or if she simply ig-

nored the warning signs that could have prevented unnecessary deaths and tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars that were squandered by Ornge.

We can't forget, of course—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order: the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, I would hope that the member will get back on track and speak about the legislation that is in front of us today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm listening carefully, and I'll bring him back if he drifts. Continue.

Mr. Michael Harris: I do appreciate that interjection, perhaps, to get a bit of a break.

We are talking about transparency and accountability. Now, I know your colleague from Trinity-Spadina encourages his colleagues to simply be transparent when it's good for the government, perhaps, just like the member stated. It has got to be a convenient time for us to be transparent with Ontarians. But we believe on this side of the House that that needs to happen 365 days a year, at every turn.

A report was recently tabled into the on-goings at Ornge. It was transparent. In fact, it was endorsed by the committee wholeheartedly, I suppose.

Then we can't forget about eHealth, the \$2-billion, maybe even \$3-billion, scandal that Ontarians, who still don't have electronic health records, are more than familiar with.

I guess I go back again to, how are we supposed to believe this piece of legislation will end up actually instilling the principles of transparency and accountability instead of being ignored like the long line of previous pieces of legislation to go back on? I just mentioned Ornge and eHealth.

We understand that this is simply another attempt by government to deflect from the decade-plus of scandal we are all paying for. I can assure you it's expensive.

That said, I do hold out hope that this is something more than an exercise in public relations and a continued cover-up, more than just the next chapter of scandal and denial. I hold out hope, but until I see this government actually engaging in the accountability and transparency this bill aspires to, I'm not going to hold my breath.

I'll leave it at that, Speaker. I thank you for the opportunity. I look forward to hearing questions and comments from my colleagues.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you to the member from the Conservative Party—very well spoken.

I sit here on this side of the House as a newer member. I can't use that phrase for too much longer, because five months have passed, but I'll still use it. As a newer member, or a new member, I'm starting to see how titles are extremely important. I can assure you, when my private member's bill comes forward, the title will match what's in the text.

I spoke for quite a long time on the fighting fraud and reducing auto insurance motion, or bill, that came forward a couple of weeks ago, or a week ago. I love the title, so I read that title and I got into the bill, and I had some support from researchers etc. Then I looked into it and it was really nothing about that. It was about having an appeal process—the courts—taken away as a right of claimants, and it was about reducing the interest rate that insurance companies have to pay for pain and suffering from the time a claim is awarded until the time it's paid. So that bill didn't really match the title.

Then I take a look at this bill that's in front of us today, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. I believe that every single member of this House wants exactly that. Every single person in this province wants exactly that. The problem is, the bill does not go far enough. We take a look, for example, at the salaries of public sector workers. How in-depth are we going? Are we attacking the severance packages? No. Are we attacking the bonus systems that up the salary that they actually get at the end of the year? I didn't see it in there.

Again, if we talk about transparency and accountability—and then there's the whole piece about not destroying information. It's very ironic, I would say, considering what's going on with the gas plant investigation by the OPP.

Again, I'm hoping, as time passes, that there is more accountability and transparency.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act.

Since the beginning, the Premier has made it a top priority to make openness and transparency available for all. This is what we campaigned on, this is what the people of Ontario elected us to do, and this is what we hope to deliver on.

What are people going to get with this act? First of all, let's look at executive compensations. We want to have a look at this and try to control these compensations in the broader public sector. We want to set some fair compensation frameworks, including hard caps.

When it comes to a patient ombudsman, we want to have a person in place who is going to be able to listen to complaints from people who have gone through the health care system and have concerns. This is what we want to deliver on.

We want to also expand the Ombudsman role. This person should be able to look at municipalities, school boards and publicly assisted universities.

When it comes to MPP expense reporting, the public is going to be able to go to our websites and look up how it is that we spent their money on out-of-town riding travel, hotels related to that travel, meals and hospitality, and that will be posted online. That's going to be there in place not just for MPPs but for cabinet ministers.

This act is going to strengthen political accountability by requiring the public posting of expense information

for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their respective staff.

Again, I say, this is what we campaigned on. This is what we show the people of Ontario, and this is what they elected us to do. They favour this, and they want this.

I'm hoping that our colleagues in the Legislature are going to share our commitment to openness and to work with us to pass these new measures.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's a pleasure to respond to my colleague from Kitchener-Conestoga's comments on the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. You know, it's these types of legislation brought by this government, with its long history of 11 years of scandals—

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know the member from Northumberland is shouting something—but really, scandals. You don't come to this job over there with a sense of integrity, or else you wouldn't be making rules up to try to make it appear that you're running a transparent and accountable government, because you have to make the rules up after you have broken most of them. It's like the old story of closing the barn door but the horse has already left.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, way gone.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, it's way past. The government is famous for lip service: they can put titles on bills that make the public think, "My gosh, they're the best and most integral and honest government out there," but really the scandals—MaRS being the most recent, the power plants, eHealth, Ornge. We've been asking for Ornge—we've asked for witnesses they will not let come forward to account about the power plants, the most recent being Laura Miller and Peter Faist—scandal after scandal. So they bring in pieces of legislation to try to—a shiny bauble over here, transparency and accountability. We have an obligation to tell the public that we don't believe that this piece of legislation is going to do anything.

Mrs. Julia Munro: We've seen this before.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, we've seen this act before; 11 years—we don't expect a lot of changes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'm pleased to be able to rise to speak to this bill with the title of "MPP accountability and transparency." I believe the bill is good in theory, but theory is not enough. The government actually needs to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. I think we've all seen over time that that's not what is happening; they're not walking the walk. It's all just lip service.

In fact, if we want to talk about transparency and openness—just a couple of days ago I was denied access to a public facility in my own riding, so I don't really understand how they can talk about openness and transparency. As a matter of fact, I haven't received an

invitation for that tour that was brought up, just to clarify that.

Also, we need to look at the public sector CEO salaries. We would like to see hard caps on those salaries, not the approach of, "We'll just keep an eye on it and see what goes on"—you know, if you like this one better than that CEO, this one's going to get paid more. There need to be hard caps on those salaries.

Back to accountability and transparency: I again bring up the gas plant scandal. We have witnesses that they're not bringing forward. The public needs to know. They deserve to know what happened, not to be shut out of any processes.

So again I say accountability and transparency—this government has not been walking the walk; it's all been lip service. It's good in theory, but my concern is that this government is not going to be really practising what it is they propose this bill to say.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga. You have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Michael Harris: I would obviously like to thank those who had an opportunity to listen to my 20-minute remarks on this particular bill. Of course, the new member from Sudbury, I appreciate your comments on that. I know we were in committee together just last week and experienced some of those similar frustrations with the Minister of Transportation. Of course, my new colleague next door to me, from Kitchener Centre—and Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, thank you for chiming in and repeating some of the things that seem to light a fire under them. They don't like hearing about the past. We will be here each and every day to remind you of that, because as I said earlier, a leopard and cheetah don't change their spots, Speaker.

Ontarians sent us, of course, to continue to hold the government accountable, so that we can ensure we don't have \$1.1-billion power plant scandals in the future. I mean, \$1 billion. I often hear about how Obama spent \$1 billion to get elected in the United States—\$1 billion, President of the United States of America. He fundraised and raised that money on his own. We used \$1.1 billion to get a few Liberal MPPs elected here in Ontario.

Hon. Michael Coteau: What about the 407?

Mr. Michael Harris: You guys keep talking about the 407. You know what? Pensioners in Ontario and Canada will be thankful down the road that their pension is steady and wholesome because of their stake of ownership in the 407. It's the only thing you've got over there, the only thing you've got and you want to talk about; yet pensioners will have a secure pension because of their stake in such an important piece of infrastructure.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned, unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, we wish this debate to continue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Hon. James J. Bradley: We want to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm glad that the members of the government would like to hear my input. I appreciate that. Thank you so much. It makes me feel very warm and fuzzy.

Interjection: You are fuzzy.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am actually warm and fuzzy, aren't I?

Because I was so kindly received, I want to start off that there are certain elements of this bill that are good, I think it's important to note. I'll quickly mention the ones particularly that we have no issue with. I think it's definitely a step in the right direction.

I'm particularly happy to see steps taken with regard to lobbyists. Schedule 8, amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act: That's a good step and I commend you for making the right decision in terms of expanding accountability in that area. These are some of the propositions that were raised by our member from Welland; and most of the additions to this component of the bill are well received and are similar to what she had put forward in her bill.

I also want to mention that there are good amendments put forward with respect to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act. That is an important amendment that you're proposing and I also recognize that's a good step forward in terms of accountability; as well as the amendments to the Public Sector Expenses Review Act. Those are some good areas and I think they're important.

There are certainly some good steps taken, but I have to come back to the overall name of the bill. Again, I think this is a good PR strategy and I recognize the skill that it takes to do this, but the reality is that when you have a bill with such a strong name, the contents have to match the strength of the name, otherwise it makes people somewhat cynical. The bill being named the MPP accountability and transparency act is quite a lofty name. But if you look into the bill, the substance is simply not there, in a number of other areas. The areas that I did earlier note—those are strong, those are good. But let's get into some of the areas that are really important and where the accountability is simply lacking or the transparency is lacking.

One of the first examples I'll turn to is the broader public sector executive compensation component of this bill. Now, it's good that you acknowledge there's a problem. Thank you. That's something that we salute and recognize, that you realize there's a problem. The public has complained about it, that there seems to be this runaway executive compensation in the public sector. The problem with this bill is, what is the solution that the bill is proposing? The bill says, "Hey, we're going to obtain information. Once we get that information, then we're

going to create a framework and then we'll do something about it." That's not really transparency. That's not really accountability. That's saying, "We'll do some stuff, we'll put some stuff together and maybe we'll come up with some stuff." It's very vague. It's not really anything concrete.

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Why couldn't any of this be done without a bill? You could review information of public sector salaries for executives. You're paying them, so you could review that information. There's nothing stopping you from doing that. There's nothing stopping you from putting together a framework. You could do that. There's nothing stopping you from putting together a policy on this. All of those steps could easily be taken without a bill.

What makes it cynical is when you say, "We're taking action on this. We're taking some steps on this," and your actions are not really actions. There's stuff that you can do without a bill, and the bill's not really doing anything; there's no cap. Then, you say, "Okay. We're not in a position to make a cap yet." That's fair, but then you can't put it into the bill and say, "Hey, we're going to take action on broader public sector executive compensation. We're going to do something about it." You may in the future, and I hope you do, but you're not right now. This is not taking any steps. This is nothing that you couldn't otherwise do. So that's a concern.

We proposed a hard cap. That's a starting place, saying, "Listen, there needs to be a hard cap in this province. For a public sector executive, there's got to be some level of a cap." We have caps on the Premier. The Premier who runs the entire province has a clear cap. Why can't we put a cap in place for executives? That seems to be a logical step, and that would be some action. You could say, "We're putting in a concrete cap. We'll review and modify it given the expertise and given the area we're dealing with. If it's in the health sector or the energy sector, we'll deal with it appropriately, but here's a general guideline for a cap that's subject to some changes." That would be a step, and I wouldn't be able to criticize that. I'd say, "Hey, listen, that's a step. You've definitely taken something bold and you've put in a cap." But without a cap, without even a framework for a cap, just saying, "We're going to obtain information to then maybe do a framework for something in the future" really is not doing a lot.

Schedule 2, amendments to the Ambulance Act: This is something I feel very strongly about. I spent a lot of time in the Ornge committee, the special committee struck to deal with Ornge. What we learned was quite compelling, quite dramatic. In Ornge, the Auditor General made it very clear—and let's just look at what happened. We saw that there was a serious problem. We noticed that there were some red flags. As the opposition, we raised those red flags. What happened was, all of the changes that happened at Ornge, all of the improvements that happened at Ornge: changing the entire board, getting rid of the chief executive officer, the CEO—all of these steps, in terms of improving Ornge, happened without a bill, without any new legislation.

What does that tell you? We had the tools already. This government had the tools already to actually do the oversight. They had the tools. The Auditor General said very clearly, “They had the tools; they simply didn’t use them.” That’s the problem. You can have legislation, you can strengthen the bill, you can strengthen the oversight mechanism, but at the end of the day you have to actually do something about it. If you’re not using the tools you have, it doesn’t matter how many tools you have—you could have the nicest, fanciest tools, and if you’re not going to build anything with them, you’re not building anything with them. That’s the bottom line. In this case, all of the amendments proposed would not have prevented Ornge—it’s the actions that were required, and the Auditor General makes this absolutely abundantly clear.

Given how much of a problem Ornge was, given how much of a problem we’ve seen in the health care sector in general and given the fact that that’s our largest expense—health care is our largest expense in terms of provincial expenses. The fact that, right now, as it stands with these amendments to the Ambulance Act, there is still no oversight of Ornge by the Ombudsman. In addition, Ornge is still an organization that can’t be called to the government agencies committee. It still can’t be brought in front of the committee that gives oversight to these arm’s-length agencies that do work for us as a province. It still can’t be done.

Again, the reason why I question the substance is that, at the end of the day—this is a clear example—this bill doesn’t change the accountability. It doesn’t address the Auditor General’s concerns that it wasn’t the legislation that was needed, it was action needed by this government.

We had the Meyers Norris Penny report that was released. The report clearly indicated all of the problems that existed with Ornge, yet—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to welcome my two constituency assistants from Brockville, Renee Jackson and Rebecca Williams. They’re looking right at me, up in the upper gallery. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I’d like to welcome the parent of Danielle Beaudoin, who is a page in the Legislature here in this session. Kim Beaudoin is with us, who comes all the way from Timiskaming–Cochrane. We’d like to welcome you.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Today we have three members of Renée Grenaway’s family here. Renée is a page from my great riding of Davenport. I’d like to welcome

Renée’s mother, Sandra Grenaway, her grandmother Gloria Bradey, and their fabulous neighbour Bernadette Boyle. They’re sitting here in the members’ gallery. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It’s my pleasure to welcome two people who are here today, Shelley Ratelband and Elaine Scriven, two very hard-working people from my constituency office. They’re in the gallery.

I also have two other people in the gallery: Gregory Van Boekel’s mother, Jennifer Van Boekel, and aunt Mary Tubbe. They’re in the public gallery this morning to make sure that Gregory is doing his job. I see he’s very attentive.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I’m delighted to have in the members’ gallery Frank Franciosa and Matt Novak, who are visiting today. Welcome.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I’m delighted to welcome students and staff from Northern Lights Public School, here in the gallery today.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I’d like to introduce two of my staff here in Queen’s Park today: Michelle Roe and Dela Horley. They keep the office in Sarnia working.

Hon. Mario Sergio: From the wonderful school of Gulfstream in my area, I have page Faith Ebanks, who has been serving during this particular session of Parliament. Her mother, Denise Lindo, is with us today. I hope she enjoys her visit to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I’d like to welcome the best constituency team in Ontario: Diane Foxton, Janet Haines, Lynne DiCocco, Sarah Ross, Victoria Stevenson, and our latest addition, Kristy May, our intern.

Miss Monique Taylor: I’m very pleased to welcome the family of our page captain Félix Nunes: mother Malika Nunes, father Carlos Nunes, grandmother Jeannine Nunes, grandfather Arthur Nunes, grandmother Juliette Losier and grandfather Jean-Yves Losier. They will be in the members’ gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I’m pleased to welcome Aaron Van Tassel. He is one of the OLIP interns who I’m fortunate to have in my office, and he is here with us in the members’ gallery.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to welcome to Queen’s Park Ms. Trish Wilde, who is in the gallery here today. Unlike in some constituency offices, Trish is all alone, looking after the Alliston office.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I’d like to welcome to the assembly today my two staff members from the constituency office, Lucille Rose and Kathy Link.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We’ll be joined today by four members from United Way Toronto: Pedro Barata, Nauman Khan, Stephanie Procyk and Michelynn Lafleche; and from the Workers’ Action Centre: Rubeni Ahilah, Beulah Paul, Beixi Liu, Justin Chung and Karen Cocq. Please welcome them to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Bill Walker: I’d like to welcome my staff: Sandra Breedon, Karen MacInnis and Lisa LaPierre.

I’d also like to extend a very happy birthday to my colleague Randy “Milo” Pettapiece.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I know we all welcome people in the building here from Ontario Pork and the egg farmers—that makes a real nice ham and eggs combination. Those who attended their breakfast can look forward to a pork reception this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Today is my House leader's 38th anniversary with his wife, Murielle. We should all wish him congratulations.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to welcome the finest constituency office staff team, who work at the Wellington-Halton Hills provincial riding office, Judy Brownrigg and Karen Thomas, who are with us today.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Legislature two of my constituency staffers: Nicole da Silva from my Chatham office and Sue Adamson from my Leamington office. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: From the great riding of Dufferin-Peel—Dufferin-Caledon—please join me in welcoming—

Laughter.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Actually, she lives in Brampton, so it is Dufferin-Peel, but we'll go with Dufferin-Caledon—Lavinia Trask, who actually lives in the leader's riding, and Carole Clark.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That means I get a pass on my next stumble.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It gives me great pleasure today to welcome my executive assistant from North Bay, Andrea Stoppa, to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Harris: I, too, would like to welcome, from Kitchener-Conestoga's constituency office, Natalie Gleba. Thanks for joining us today at Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Lindsay Rennie, who is part of my team in Stratford, here for constituency training.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I thought I'd go last and welcome my EA from St. Thomas, Whitney McWilliam, from the land of no windmills.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to welcome, from my Parry Sound office, Jess Fargher, who is going to be here at Queen's Park today; and from my Bracebridge office, Christine Marshall, who will also be here at Queen's Park today.

M. Michael Mantha: J'aimerais introduire un vrai-ment bon francophone, M. Jean-Yves Losier, qui est ici comme grand-père, en train de regarder son beau petit-enfant, Félix Nunes—qui est le capitaine aujourd'hui—et aussi qui a eu la difficulté et la grosse tâche d'enseigner à un de nos membres, Taras Natyshak.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Bienvenue.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each caucus to speak on Remembrance Day;

and that following all the remarks we rise and observe two minutes of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute and to include two minutes of silence after the tributes. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: My dad was a navy veteran. He was a brave man. His ship was torpedoed twice. He couldn't swim.

Growing up, he used to say, "Son, you haven't paid your debt to the past until you've left the future indebted to yourself." I used to wonder what he meant by that, but standing here today, I understand. In a few short days, we will gather together, heads bowed, in sombre and solemn remembrance to honour the sacrifices Canadian soldiers have made in the two great wars, in Korea, in Afghanistan and in numerous peacekeeping missions. As the sound of the Last Post touches our ears and the familiar words of Colonel John McCrae's memorial poem, In Flanders Fields, once again touch our hearts, our thoughts will be filled with sorrow for those lost on foreign battlefields, be it on the land, in the air or at sea.

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The contributions Canadians have made in these historic conflicts solidified our reputation as a nation that doesn't look for fights but will not shirk from them. Those who answered the call to serve defined our Canada, known across the globe as a strong, peaceful and multicultural country—our Canada, a nation that stands up in defence of freedom; our Canada, a free nation, a privilege earned by the soldier and then donated to us all.

It is our duty to remember how they died and the sacrifices they made. But it is equally important to remember how they lived—with duty, selflessness and honour—and to reflect on those who came home, our glorious veterans. Let us pay tribute to how they went on living and the values they represent, values forged in the despair of war, values learned on battlefields, values then brought home to build this great province and this great nation. How they lived.

Last week, I attended the funeral of Corporal Nathan Cirillo in my beloved hometown of Hamilton. This young man's life was taken so callously because he represented the very ideals that define Canada: strength, tolerance and peace. Those of us in attendance and, indeed, the entire nation were given the unique privilege to hear about Corporal Cirillo's life, to catch a glimpse of a proud single father who adored his little boy, Marcus; a man with an infectious smile and a huge heart; a soldier who found the greatest honour in representing his regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, while guarding our country's most treasured memorial.

Reflecting on how Nathan and all our veterans lived is truly the essence of Remembrance Day: to celebrate rich lives lost or forever changed in the defence of freedom and ideals we have come to cherish. There simply is no greater sacrifice.

They believed in a cause worth fighting for. They believed in a greater good and that their endeavours, rise

with great peril, had a purpose for future generations. What a great lesson for us all, especially each and every one of us who has been granted the extraordinary privilege to serve in this place and to try as best we can to make a difference for future Ontario generations. To make lives better for future generations, we must overcome adversity and emulate the hard-won values our soldiers have forged for us to follow.

We are indeed indebted to those who served, Speaker, both living and dead. It is our duty, as Lieutenant Colonel McRae reminds us, "To you from failing hands we throw / The torch; be yours to hold it high."

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, lest we forget not only how they died but how they lived: For to live in the hearts of those we leave behind is not to die.

The question we should ask ourselves today is, how will we live? Let us resolve to leave a future indebted to ourselves, for that surely would be the best way to remember those who showed us how to live. It is also the best legacy we could possibly leave to our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm humbled and proud to deliver Remembrance Day remarks in this Legislature on behalf of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Usually, this chamber echoes with partisanship and confrontational arguments from members representing communities all across Ontario, holding strong views and beliefs on any given number of issues. However, this is an occasion when partisanship is set aside and consensus is easily reached, a time when MPPs of all parties are united in pausing together to remember and honour those Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice to defend freedom and democracy.

As we strive to represent the people of Ontario in this place, we must always remember the noble efforts of those who served to preserve and protect our just society. We debate issues of the day in this chamber in absolute freedom. It should always be remembered that this absolute freedom came with a price, and to this day it continues to come at a price.

On November 11, we will honour the thousands of Canadian men and women who risked their lives and all those who lost their lives to defend freedom and democracy and those who continue to do so today. Canadians are painfully and keenly aware that our safety and security are not taken for granted.

In less than a week, Canada saw two men who served this nation struck down. The loss of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo reminds us that the danger for our armed forces personnel begins the moment they the don uniform of public protection and service.

Those of us who had the privilege of attending Corporal Cirillo's funeral will never forget the image of his young son wearing a smaller version of his father's glengarry, the military headdress, knowing that he will grow up without his father. It hit home for me—and, I'm sure, for all—the tremendous sacrifice that we ask of our men and women in uniform and their families.

Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is of special significance, whether we are 10th-generation Canadians or new Canadians. Canada and the world we know today would not be possible without the courage, valour and sacrifice of our veterans and fallen soldiers. They fought for our right to assemble. They fought for the very diversity that we prize in this country. In times of war and on peace-keeping missions around the world, our troops have served Canada with courage and resolve.

We will remember that their sacrifice made way for our liberties. We will remember the honour with which they served, which in turn shaped our democracy. We will remember that those values that we hold so dear, which include the fundamental freedoms of democracy and liberty, are a direct result of their selflessness and their patriotism. We thank them for their service that has kept and continues to keep Canada strong and free. They put our safety and our security above their own. They do this for us.

Thank you to the Canadian men and women, past and present, who served our country with brave resolve, who have risked and given their lives so that future generations could enjoy the blessings of peace and democracy. They deserve our greatest gratitude. We will remember them.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As Remembrance Day approaches, next week, it's vitally important that we in this House do what we are doing, which is take a moment to pay tribute to our veterans and to our fallen soldiers.

I rise on behalf of my caucus and on behalf of New Democrats across Ontario to say thank you to those women and men who have served and, in some cases, given their lives for our country. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude—a debt of gratitude to veterans and to their families. We know that without their sacrifice we would not be standing here today, enjoying the freedoms that they fought for and which we all hold so dear.

In light of the recent tragic events in Quebec and Ottawa, this year's Remembrance Day ceremonies will take on a particularly sombre tone. I would like to recognize again the two men lost to their families and to us as Canadians just a few short weeks ago. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo will forever be remembered by the people of this country, and I ask everyone who is marking Remembrance Day next week to give special thought to their families.

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It is said that in war there are no unwounded soldiers. How we, as Canadians, take care of and pay respect to our veterans should always keep this fact in mind. Veterans and their families deserve respect and dignity. I think that's a value that all Canadians agree upon. This is why taking the time to mark Remembrance Day every year is so important to all of us.

Today New Democrats join with our House colleagues in the Liberal caucus and Conservative caucus to say thank you to the loyal and courageous soldiers who have and will continue to risk their lives for our safety, for our

freedom and for our democracy. We will never forget your service. We will never forget your sacrifice. We will remember you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the three members for their very heartfelt and powerful words. At this time, according to the unanimous consent, I would ask all members and guests to rise for two minutes of solemn quiet.

The House observed two minutes' silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for Deputy Premier. Deputy, in November 2008, the Ministry of Health received a letter from a whistle-blower who had worked at Ornge. In his letter of April 2008, Keith Walmsley said that there were two sets of accounting books: one was used for internal reporting and the other was used for quarterly reporting to the ministry—all with a view to hiding the surplus of money Ornge had received from the ministry.

Deputy Premier, were you briefed on the problems at Ornge raised by this whistle-blower when you first became Minister of Health in October 2009?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the Minister of Health would like to speak about further progress at Ornge.

As the member opposite knows, we have had years now of discussion about Ornge. The committee has met. There has been great debate in this House.

The fact is that we've moved on at Ornge. We have new leadership. When I became aware of the problems at Ornge, I worked closely with the Auditor General to ensure that he had the information he needed as he did his audit. We brought in a completely new board, new leadership and new quality improvement plans.

The answer is that Ornge is a far, far better organization now than it was when I became minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Deputy Premier: From my experience in having held a number of cabinet positions, the minister would have been fully briefed by ministry officials on the top issues and concerns when she first took office, and that was October 2009. So I say to you, Deputy, that it's beyond believable that you would not have been briefed on the serious allegations raised by the whistle-blower's letter.

In addition to alleging shady accounting practices at Ornge, Mr. Walmsley says, "Individuals are also benefiting far too luxuriously, for example the president's bonus of \$250,000."

Deputy Premier, how can you continue to stand up every day and insist that you knew nothing about the problems at Ornge until December 2011?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was called to committee. I testified on three different occasions. I would be happy to send you the transcripts from that if you would like. I stand by my testimony at that committee.

What I can tell you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what I can tell you is that, in response to concerns at Ornge, it was almost three years ago that I introduced legislation in this House to remedy things at Ornge. That bill has been debated on an astounding 23 different days in the Legislature. It was sent to committee in April 2013, more than a year ago, but both the opposition parties ganged up to refuse hearings on that issue.

It's time to vote for Bill 8 and get this matter behind us.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Leeds–Grenville will come to order.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the deputy: The consequences of the Deputy Premier's failure to act could not have been more serious for Ontarians. The committee learned that, between October 2009, when the Deputy Premier became the Minister of Health, and December 2011, when she says she first became aware of the problems at Ornge, there were at least two serious incidents that are now the subject of multi-million dollar lawsuits against this government. In May 2010, a patient had to undergo an amputation as a result of a delay in transport. In July 2010, a patient from the Soo area died as a result of a delay in transport.

Deputy Premier, patients have died because you sat back for two years as Minister of Health and did nothing about Ornge. How can you not feel a moral obligation to do the right thing and step down?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues on this side of the House are proud of the work that the Deputy Premier did when she was Minister of Health to turn Ornge around, to make the necessary changes to restore the public's confidence in this important organization.

Not only the former minister—now the Deputy Premier—but we continue to make important changes. She has mentioned that we have new leadership: a new CEO, a new board, a new chair. This Deputy Premier introduced changes including a new performance agreement, conflict-of-interest guidelines, a patient advocate—many changes.

There are changes still required. That's why we speak to the importance of getting the opposition's support to pass Bill 8, to make those further changes and complete the transition.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. A total of 86 Ontario municipalities have now declared that they are not willing hosts for the continued spread of green energy projects. These include the four municipalities that surround wpd's application to build eight, 500-foot—sorry, the Premier is not here.

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Interjection: The Deputy Premier.

Mr. Jim Wilson: The Deputy Premier—to build eight 500-foot-tall wind turbines on the flight path of the Collingwood Regional Airport.

I say to the Deputy Premier, this is the very same project that the Premier committed to personally review the weekend before she became Liberal leader, when she held a press conference in Collingwood. At the time, she said she would personally review that project.

So I say to you, when all four municipalities are against this development in my riding—because at that same press conference, the Premier said that if the municipalities are against it, they shouldn't have these projects forced on them—is your government still going ahead with this dangerous proposal to build 500-foot-tall wind turbines in the flight path of the Collingwood airport?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I recognize that it may have been a slip, but I do want to remind all members—I take it as an opportunity, not a criticism, to remind everybody we do not talk about anyone's attendance in this place.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Yes, because there's a lot missing—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me, Minister. I've already explained my circumstance. I don't need editorials. I did say that I believed it was a slip, so I wanted to leave it at that—a teachable moment.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Was Ornge a slip?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have looked at the procurement process for renewables, and we have a new regimen in place. In fact, there is a very current procurement going on at the present time for large renewable projects which require and will require very significant municipal participation.

On the other hand—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to let it build, so stop.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: On the other hand, there are a number of existing contracts which are out there, which we will not break because we will have the types of liabilities which occurred, as they know, with several of our other energy projects at very significant cost.

There are communities that are asking us to break contracts for large renewable projects. There are some that are asking us to extend contracts—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary? The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This is not about old projects, Minister. These are new problems.

Placement of industrial wind turbines and the related transmission lines are causing problems all across Ontario. When you allowed the Green Energy Act to strip municipalities of their planning power, you also left those same municipalities to clean up your mess.

This summer, Dufferin Wind Power has been installing a transmission line for its wind farm in Dufferin county—this summer; now. In Melancthon, there are some transmission poles that are so close to the road, the mayor has told me they're not going to be able to safely plow that road. The municipality knew this would be a problem, raised it during the consultation in the spring, raised it with the Premier and your ministers through numerous letters, and you still allowed the company to ignore their concerns.

Is this your idea of your new consultation process?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: That party continues to ask us to break existing contracts. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, what they did—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order. The clock is still running.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The PC plan was to cancel existing contracts. They introduced legislation which would give the Minister of Energy the right to cancel existing contracts. Our calculations would show that that would expose the provincial government to liability to the extent of about \$20 billion to cancel power purchase contracts.

They continually have risen in this House to ask us to break existing contracts and expose the province to billions of dollars in penalties—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who's not in his seat, will come to order.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This is about public safety, and that is your job.

Speaker, I'd like a page to bring the minister a picture—so that you start to understand how close the utility poles are to the existing roadway. If these poles aren't relocated, Melancthon may be forced to redesign the road to ensure safety and allow winter maintenance. The Minister of Energy or the Minister of Transportation could direct that these transmission lines be moved, so that Melancthon residents are not forced to pay the additional costs of redesigning the road. Will you do it?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member knows that there's an environmental process—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron—Bruce will come to order. The member from Simcoe North will come to order. And some are getting close to warnings.

Carry on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You couldn't bear to look at the picture.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke will come to order—two.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I have a quote here from the member from Nipissing when he was mayor.

Interjections.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The MPP from Nipissing said, "Taking advantage of locally available green power resources is a good fit with the long-range development strategy we have for the community. I am particularly pleased with the relationship we have struck with West Wind Development ... for the first half of the project. I am confident that the company's reputation as a responsible wind power developer can put North Bay 'on the map' as a showcase for the sensitive and responsible development of this great renewable energy resource."

Mr. Speaker, they continually stand up and challenge us to cancel existing contracts which will expose the province to \$20 billion—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: There is a process for environmental assessment—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand. You sit. New question.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I want to ask the Deputy Premier an extremely important question. It's a question that matters to Ontarians in every corner of this province. How many people will this government fire as part of the Liberal austerity budget?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I can assure the leader of the third party that our government is determined to get to balance by 2017-18, but we would not do it at the expense of our growing economy.

We have a plan in place that will get us to balance. I have been appointed as President of Treasury Board with a strong Treasury Board. We are looking very closely at how we can get better value for the money we spend, so that we can provide better services to the people of this province. The status quo is not an option. We must get to work and get the best value possible for every tax dollar.

I look forward to working with the NDP because I think they may even have some good ideas on how to continue to get better value for our hard-earned dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberal austerity budget will cut 6% from most ministries each and every year. Don Drummond looked at the Liberal budget and he said that would mean 100,000 job cuts. The people of Ontario soundly rejected the Conservative plan to cut 100,000 jobs. Why are the Liberals now picking up the same plan and firing 100,000 people?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think anybody watching at home might need a little reminder that in fact the NDP built their platform—all nine pages of it, including the cover and the back cover. Their nine-page platform used our assumptions, and then they said, "We can actually go further. We can find an additional \$600-million worth of cuts."

I find it puzzling a little bit that the third party would be concerned about cuts when they actually promised to cut further and deeper—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let's just take a look at how we are doing in this province as our economy continues to improve. Since 2009, the recessionary low, we've added over half a million jobs. Our unemployment rate is down. Our job numbers are up. Last year, Ontario employment increased by 100,000 jobs. We're on the right track and we will stay on the right track.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, 1,000 jobs not coming to Windsor for the Ford plant; Windsor's transmission plant closed; Oshawa's truck plant closed; Ford's St. Thomas plant closed; St. Catharines' components plant, Navistar in Chatham—the list goes on and on.

The fact is, Bloomberg News said that the Liberal budget means the deepest cuts since Mike Harris. You know, the Premier used to say that she actually got into politics because of Mike Harris. We used to think that was to oppose him, not to imitate him. Now she's going to go even further than Mike Harris went.

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The Premier called the PC plan to fire 100,000 people "disastrous," but she's going to tint 100,000 pink slips with Liberal red instead of Tory blue, and she insists that that's a progressive plan. Do the Liberals think it's progressive to fire 100,000 people?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm sure the leader of the third party will be very pleased to join us in celebrating a very significant investment that is happening today in Alliston. I'm very pleased that Honda is making the Alliston facility the global lead for the very popular Honda Civic. That is very, very good news for Ontario and very good news for Alliston.

Not only, these investments—it is almost a \$1-billion investment—safeguard 4,000 highly skilled direct positions and help thousands more who are in that supply chain: Honda's investment, \$857 million over the next five years in the latest assembly and engine manufacturing technology. This is fantastic news and a sign of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If you keep jobs at Honda and still fire 100,000 people, that's 100,000 people who are still unemployed.

My next question is also for the Deputy Premier. Last week, 15 nurses in Leamington learned that they'd lose their jobs when the hospital decided that they'd be cutting the obstetrics and gynecology unit at the hospital. Not only will that put nurses out of work, it is going to make it extremely difficult for women in this part of the southwest to access ob-gyn services close to home.

What other health services in Ontario are being cut as part of the Liberal austerity budget?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm happy to speak about the Leamington hospital and the decision that was taken by the board of the hospital on a go-forward basis to close the obstetrical unit. It isn't a final decision because, in fact, it's a decision by the LHIN. In fact, the LHIN has announced already that next Wednesday they'll be having a community meeting. They're going to have an open board meeting of the LHIN specifically on this issue, including one hour set aside specifically for members of the community to speak to this important issue. Although, in fact, it was a decision by the local board of the hospital, it isn't a decision which is finalized.

I should add, as well, that currently, Windsor Regional Hospital is a—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, come to order.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —destination for the people in Leamington. Already, roughly 50% of the women who deliver and who are from the Leamington area do already deliver in Windsor.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Two weeks ago, 40 nurses at the Timmins and District Hospital found out they would be losing their jobs, and 26 beds will disappear. So I repeat the question: What other health services in Ontario are being cut as part of the Liberal austerity budget?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that from time to time specific changes are made by hospitals in terms of their staffing requirements. The fact is that in the last year alone, 4,000 more nurses were employed in this province. In fact, 24,000 more nurses are working in Ontario since our party, the Liberal Party, took power in 2003.

I understand that the member opposite, the leader of the third party, wants to focus on specific incidents where human resources decisions are made—frankly, where those decisions should be made: at the locality, by the hospital, in concert with the local LHIN as well—but the reality is that we're deeply committed to the nursing profession in this province, and the evidence is that

we've dramatically increased not only our investments in that profession, but we've increased the scope of practice, the nurse practitioner-led clinics, but also 4,000 new nurses last year alone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When it comes to Liberal austerity cuts, the health care system is not the only victim. People for Education has reported that the Liberals have slated 125 schools for closure before 2015. That means throwing parents and students into chaos across Ontario. Can the Deputy Premier tell students and their families just what communities will be losing their local schools as part of the Liberal austerity plan?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm always fascinated when I get these numbers that pop up out of nowhere. I can guarantee you that there has been no directive, so I have no answer to what 125 schools, because there is no list.

What I can tell you is that we do know that there are over 600 schools in Ontario which are more than half empty. We are actually spending on the order of about \$1 billion per year on empty seats. We think, on our side of the House, that it would be better—

Interjection: Change the funding formula.

Hon. Liz Sandals: That's a very good idea. We will change the funding formula.

We think, on our side of the House, that we should invest money in the children who are in our schools rather than empty seats.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question this morning is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, last week when our tourism critic asked for the economic analysis supporting the punitive aviation fuel tax you've placed on Ontario families, you avoided the question. Minister, let me help you with the math. We told you about the loss of 3,000 jobs and \$100 million in GDP predicted by Dr. Fred Lazar of York University's Schulich School of Business.

Dr. Lazar also told us that eliminating the tax—as in BC, New Brunswick, Quebec and Saskatchewan—could provide a \$138-million economic boost and add 52,000 additional tourists and close to 2,000 jobs. But we're going in the wrong direction. In fact, we're the only jurisdiction heading in the opposite direction.

Tell us, Minister: What is the secret? What economic analysis have you done on the impact of job and revenue losses that this aviation tax will cost?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Since we announced the modest aviation fuel tax increase of a penny, Air Canada has launched new flights from Toronto to Rio de Janeiro, Amsterdam and Panama City.

We should also note that in comparison to some other jurisdictions—and I believe they've named Buffalo as one. There are 68,000 flights in Buffalo; in Pearson in Toronto there are 420,000 flights. There are seven airlines in Buffalo; there's over 65 airlines in Toronto at

Pearson. They only serve 22 cities; in Ontario at Pearson, they serve over 180 destinations worldwide. In the analysis that he makes, they're comparing five million travellers in Buffalo; at Pearson it's over 36 million in 2013 alone.

You should also note that when they talk about the increase, which hasn't been touched since 1992—and it's a penny—they are asking the wrong level of government. If they're going to petition anybody, they should let it be known—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, as I have mentioned, every other province in Canada is going in the opposite direction from you.

As I've said before, your numbers just don't add up. In fact, you've marginalized them by characterizing the increase as a mere penny. Minister, your tax creates one of the highest—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. It cuts both ways.

Please finish.

Mr. Michael Harris: I know it's tough having to hear and be reminded of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, your tax creates one of the highest fuel taxes in North America. That means higher ticket prices for travellers—families and business people. It means, Minister, another 400,000 travellers diverted from Ontario airports on top of the three million who already cross the border to fly from aviation-fuel-tax-free airports like Buffalo.

We've seen the headlines: The Buffalo airport will take advantage of your increases, putting on a full-court press courting travellers as well as airlines south of the border. Sunwing is just the wing tip of the iceberg.

Minister, you have no economic analysis. Will you please join us—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Michael Harris: Heed our call to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I stand you sit.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The marketing manager at Buffalo airport called Ontario's fuel increase insignificant compared to the federal taxes and surcharges that are being charged now.

Pearson has actually indicated that it will continue to grow, regardless of the issues that we put forward.

1120

The member opposite should know this: An average ticket price domestically to Vancouver from Toronto is about \$284, of which \$5.90 goes to the province of Ontario. How much goes to the federal government? Fifty-two dollars, Mr. Speaker. An international flight to Orlando: \$4 goes to the province, \$44 goes to the federal government, and \$34 goes to the US government authorities.

You should be fighting for Ontario. You should tell your cousins to stand up for Ontario and give more of that money back to us so we can invest—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

New question, the member from Parkdale—High—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, in the middle of my sentence, will now be warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe North, come to order.

The member from Parkdale—High Park.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. We now know that the government only got two bidders for the Eglinton Crosstown public-private partnership—just two. With only two giant consortia bidding, taxpayers are going to pay more; that's inevitable. In fact, last year, the Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario said the government was about to overpay by half a billion dollars for the Eglinton Crosstown P3 alone. These same warnings came from ATU local 113, the Amalgamated Transit Union, the TTC and experts in the American Public Transportation Association as well.

So with the contract about to be signed, how much, in fact, will the government overpay for the Eglinton Crosstown mega-contract?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Parkdale—High Park for that question. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT project is one of the most exciting projects that our government has in our lineup. As the member there knows, there is already work that's under way.

Speaker, it's important to put this project, in terms of its scope and its importance, in context. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT will run about 19 kilometres through midtown Toronto, with 25 stations and stops. The province of Ontario, because of the leadership of our Premier and this government, is investing \$5.3 billion in this project. This means that the Eglinton Crosstown LRT is the largest public transit project in more than half a century here in the province of Ontario.

That work is taking place in communities represented by people like my parliamentary assistant, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, our new member from Davenport and others. It's going to provide positive results because of the leadership that we are showing on this side and the importance that we assign to building Ontario up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: With public-private partnerships, the public is kept in the dark, as the minister knows, while the important decisions are actually made. We don't find out about surprises like a half-billion dollar

overrun in costs or dirty diesel trains until it's way too late.

We know the plans for the Eglinton Crosstown have changed. There's no question about that. Kennedy station might need to be moved, and there will be complicated conversations and connections with TTC bus and subway lines and the TTC itself. We don't know if expensive change orders will be needed. The public is completely in the dark.

Instead of negotiating the final plans for Eglinton behind closed doors, with private contractors, will the government publicly disclose the contract requirements so we can know exactly what we are paying billions for?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, Speaker, I think it's important for me to say, and this has been said by the Premier and it has been said by others on this side of the House, that this is in keeping with the unfortunate mythology that this member and that caucus continue to spin about how our government moves forward with important transit and transportation infrastructure.

The member speaks about the impact this is having on people and whether they know transparently about what's happening. Speaker, in fact, my own in-laws live a stone's throw away from where this Eglinton Crosstown LRT will be built, in the neighbourhood of Dufferin and Eglinton. When I see them on a regular basis, they are excited; they are thrilled because a part of their neighbourhood will be built up over the next number of years. That's the kind of transparency that we're delivering. That's the kind of positive results that we're delivering.

Speaker, it's important to note that over the last number of months, at every opportunity, when our government has provided a plan to the people, be it in the budget, in an election platform or in the second version of the budget, that member and that party have voted to stop public transit investments, and that, Speaker, is a shame.

BUILDING CODE

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, last month you announced some significant changes to the Ontario building code. Taking effect on January 1, 2015, Ontario will now allow the maximum height of wood-frame buildings to be increased from four to six storeys.

While new to Ontario, mid-rise wood construction is common in parts of Europe, such as Scandinavia, Austria and Italy. British Columbia introduced amendments to its building code in 2009—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, come to order.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: —to allow six-storey lightweight wood-frame construction for residential occupancy. Now over 100 mid-rise wood buildings are currently built or are in construction in BC.

Minister, although mid-rise wood might be permitted in other jurisdictions, Ontarians need to know these changes are the right fit for our economy.

Speaker, can the minister explain how mid-rise wood construction will impact Ontarians?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, I sure can, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be delighted to do so. I want to thank the member from Cambridge for that question.

Allowing mid-rise wood construction will encourage the building of affordable housing across the province. As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I know this is incredibly important. In fact, some people in the building industry say it could lower the cost of some houses as much as 30%.

These changes will also give builders more choice in how buildings are designed, filling a gap in the housing market between high- and low-rise buildings, and that will certainly enhance our streetscapes.

The change will also help strengthen the forestry sector, which creates thousands of jobs and sustains the local economies of more than 260 communities across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, mid-rise wood construction is just one way that our government is working to build Ontario up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Minister, in my riding of Cambridge, three-storey buildings on Main Street in Galt were initially built from wood in the mid-1850s. After a devastating fire in the mid-1850s, these buildings were rebuilt in stone.

Speaker, there is some concern regarding the safety of six-storey wood-frame buildings. Many wonder about an increased risk of building fires and whether occupants' and firefighters' well-being will be compromised as a result. In addition, Ontario is moving ahead on its own mid-rise wood amendments before similar amendments are made to model the national building code.

As with any impactful province-wide change of this nature, Ontarians need to know that considerations of public safety are paramount. Speaker, through you, can the minister explain what safety—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is warned.

Please finish.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what safety measures have been incorporated into these amendments to the building code?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, that's a good and fair question, and it deserves a good and fair answer. Thank you.

Speaker, safety is always our number one priority when considering changes to the building code. Our choice to allow mid-rise wood construction is based on extensive public consultation with the fire service, building regulators and building professionals.

We believe our made-in-Ontario model for mid-rise wood offers the highest degree of public and firefighter safety in Canada. For example, all mid-rise wood buildings in Ontario must have stairwells and roofs built with non-combustible materials. Ontario requires all new con-

struction to meet very high safety standards, especially with respect to fire safety, and mid-rise will be no different.

Lastly, I would like to thank a couple of colleagues: the honourable member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who first introduced a private member's bill, capably assisted by his honourable colleague from Thunder Bay, the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

1130

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Agriculture: Today is the one-year anniversary of the Local Food Act, which you chose to proclaim in sections and play politics with for election purposes. We shamed you into finally proclaiming the section for increased access to local food through the tax credit for farmers who donate to community food programs, food banks, churches and other groups like that. That was an amendment based on five years' work by our colleague, the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Applause.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Good work, Bob.

But you still haven't proclaimed other parts of the bill. You speak of being open and transparent, but today you should be publishing your first annual report on local food in Ontario. Minister, today is your opportunity to be open and transparent. Why are you saying one thing and doing another?

Hon. Jeff Leal: That question is a bit rich from that member. When it came to developing the Local Food Act, we took the opportunity to reach around to all sides of this House to put together a piece of legislation that is profoundly changing the agricultural sector in the province of Ontario. We've introduced the sale of VQA wines at farmers' markets in the province of Ontario. Since May, the sales of those VQA wines are a quarter of a million dollars, contributing to the great success of the Local Food Act right across the province of Ontario.

But the fact is that on numerous occasions I've gone out of my way to recognize the member from Sarnia–Lambton. When we did the announcement in Hamilton, I made sure that the member from Sarnia–Lambton was up front with me and gave him a chance to speak to the gathering that day and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, it's a little baffling. It's been a year; there's no data. One of the provisions of the Local Food Act was to publish goals and targets. Minister, you've had a bit of a rocky start, obviously, with farmers and food banks—and the needy, who would truly benefit from this kind of legislation.

Again, you talk about being open and transparent. This is a prime example of how you aren't and how you fail to live up to your own legislation. We all voted for it. Your Premier boasts of being a champion for local food, yet years later I ask, why do we still not see local food in our

schools, in our hospitals and in other government institutions? Why are you holding back? Why has that initiative not been proclaimed?

Hon. Jeff Leal: The Local Food Act has been an overwhelming success in the province of Ontario. Everywhere I go, in the north, south, east, west, I visit farmers and they continually talk about the success of the Local Food Act.

Just this morning—perhaps the member for Haldimand–Norfolk was a bit late when he came to the Egg Farmers of Ontario's omelette breakfast this morning. But again, during my remarks, I paid tribute to the member from Sarnia–Lambton, the gentleman who developed the tax credit for donations that are made by farmers to food banks in the province of Ontario. That's the way we operate on this side of the House. We recognize people who make contributions to the agricultural sector in the province of Ontario. I don't share the member's assertions at all on the Local Food Act.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Minister of Natural Resources: Minister, you met with the Rainy River district delegation that travelled to Queen's Park to ask you and the Premier for your government's help with ensuring the mill in their town resumes operations. They have asked for your help—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: —and as minister, you have a responsibility to the people of Fort Frances. You can't leave this to the two companies to solve. As minister, you need to involve yourself and your ministry in helping to broker a solution. You know as well as I do that there is more than enough wood in the Crossroute Forest to meet the needs of all parties and that, therefore, this should be a win-win situation. Minister, the Rainy River district and I are asking you to do your job and help broker a solution that creates jobs in Atikokan, Ignace and Thunder Bay, and saves the 1,000 jobs in Fort Frances. Minister, will you do that?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. She is right; we did meet with the delegation, both the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and myself, and I would describe the meeting as productive and conducive to trying to see what we can do to move the process forward. What I would say, too, is to offer my strength of support, specifically, to Roy Avis, the mayor of Fort Frances, who in my opinion is a true gentleman and who I think is one of the best mayors we have right across northern Ontario.

I've had opportunities to work with Mayor Avis previously on other files. I very much respect the position that he feels that he's in. I very much respect the position that the community of Fort Frances feels that they are in as a broader community. I understand their fear, and I understand their anxiety. As I've said in this House over

the course of the last several days, I'm committed—and have been. We've never stopped trying to work to find a solution, not only for Fort Frances but for the broader community of northwestern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Minister, it's reassuring to hear that we have your support, but what we really need is your action. As minister, you have a responsibility to the people of Fort Frances. The mayor of Fort Frances and First Nations chiefs from across the Rainy River district came here this week to meet with you and ask you to act. They came 1,800 kilometres after the business deal fell apart because this is a government-related problem having to do with the forest licence.

Minister, the clock is ticking. I ask you again: Will you find a solution that benefits the people living in communities across the northwest?

Hon. Bill Mauro: In my first response, I referenced that I very personally can understand and be attuned to the feelings that are in the community of Fort Frances. In 2005, when the forest industry first started to go through the economic cataclysm that I think it's fair to describe it as, my home community of Thunder Bay was very much affected. There were multiple sawmills and multiple pulp-and-paper mills that had been there and serviced our community for generations that closed, so I very much respect what is going on in Fort Frances.

As I've said repeatedly in the House, we are looking to try and find a solution. I would respectfully suggest, also, that the solutions that have been put forward at this point by the third party are not necessarily things that I think can work. We are open to all options. We are open to all good ideas, but we need to understand that there are other forestry operators working right across the province of Ontario who will very closely be paying attention to what we do in response to this particular situation.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail, l'honorable Kevin Flynn. The Standing Committee on General Government met earlier this week for clause-by-clause consideration of an important piece of legislation, Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to commend the third party—as I often do—for joining with the government in putting forward important, enhancing and substantive amendments which ultimately strive to capture the many lessons learned during our consultations with the public and stakeholders.

But regrettably, the official opposition resorted to procedural games, filibusters and delaying tactics in an obvious attempt to derail the proceedings. They introduced hundreds—

Mr. Han Dong: Four hundred.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: —of repetitive, meaningless amendments in order to tie up the proceedings.

These disruptive efforts, I'm pleased to say, were met with sheer determination on the government side. The

committee has completed its work, and third reading debate has been completed. Can we get on with this bill?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I want to thank the member for his important and very timely question on this bill. I want to begin by thanking the majority of the members of the general government committee for the hard work, the contributions and the advocacy they've had for workers in the development of this bill—especially the Chair, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, for the excellent work he did the other night. Passing this bill is about protecting workers in this province. We can't afford to delay it any further than these tactics already have.

One of the main features of the bill is changes to the minimum wage that are based on the consumer price index. It's going to provide certainty to workers and certainty to business, as they are able to plan for any changes in the future to the minimum wage.

In order for this bill to come into effect for workers in the province of Ontario in time for next year, this bill needs to pass through the Legislature in a very short period of time. I'm hoping that all members will support it today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: As my colleague from Trinity–Spadina reminds me, he has actually endured 400 filibuster-type amendments, so I think we have to commend the government side for that.

The workers of Ontario, I think, appreciate our overall efforts on their collective behalf. I think it's clear that we can, should and must vote in favour of Bill 18 today, particularly if our intention is to tie the minimum wage to inflation. Of course, organizationally, this has to be implemented soon, in time for next year.

1140

Minister, Bill 18 will be brought back to the House, I think momentarily, for a third and final reading before it's voted upon. If passed, promises to make stronger protections for thousands of workers across the province will of course emanate from this new law.

Speaker, I'd like to know: What can I report back to the people of the great riding of Etobicoke North with regard to Bill 18?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you for the excellent supplementary. The member is absolutely correct. It has been nearly a year and many, many hours of debate since we first proposed the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, which will, if passed—it takes very important steps to ensure that every Ontarian in this province gets the paycheque they've earned at the end of the day. It protects vulnerable workers from dangerous working situations. It makes our businesses more competitive and it ensures they treat their workers fairly. It ties annual changes in the minimum wage to inflation. We need to pass it now in order for this to take effect in 2015.

Speaker, this morning members will have a chance to vote on this important piece of legislation in third reading. I would urge all members of the House to continue

their support of this bill at third reading, just as we did unanimously as a group at second reading. I urge that support.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, the Leamington District Memorial Hospital board of directors is being forced to close Leamington's obstetrics unit due to a lack of funding. This closure will result in the firing of up to 40 good-paying jobs, including registered nurses.

Keep in mind, Minister, Leamington is still reeling from the massive job losses that hit this community earlier this year. This places Leamington's economic recovery in jeopardy, but more importantly, it puts the health of local residents in jeopardy. Mothers going into labour will now be forced to make the long drive to Windsor.

With millions of dollars spent on middle management in health care, why is there no room for Leamington's vital clinic?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm happy to speak to this issue again. I do understand that the Leamington district hospital board has made this difficult decision, on a go-forward basis—the recommendation to close the obstetrics unit or at least certainly certain elements of it, that being the birthing of children.

Many aspects of the Leamington obstetrics program, gynecological program, the board has considered and will wish to retain. The next stage of this process, as it should be, Mr. Speaker, is that the local health integration network of that region be involved. They are involved; my office has been in regular contact with them. There is, as I mentioned earlier, a public meeting next Wednesday to give the opportunity for the public to be heard on this important issue to the people of Leamington.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister: The sustainability of health care in rural communities has to be looked at through a different lens. Minister, I understand that LDMH has in fact submitted a proposal that would incorporate midwife and ob-gyn programs that have already been acknowledged as a unique and viable program. However, the Erie St. Clair LHIN has not provided the support needed to move funding of the program forward. This LHIN has cut \$2 million in funding to LDMH.

Health system funding reform is closing rural hospitals. Your ministry is putting mothers and families at risk by not providing this funding in order to keep obstetrics in rural hospitals. By the way, Minister, LDMH has provided excellent health care in the community since 1956.

My question to you is: Why has this government broken its promise to make its decisions through a municipal lens?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think the member opposite needs to talk to his colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen

Sound to see what we are doing with our rural hospitals. I was with him a number of weeks ago in Markdale, announcing that the government will be constructing a brand new Markdale hospital in that small rural environment. So the truth is the opposite of what the member is trying to portray.

With respect to Leamington hospital, the services that will be retained—in fact, the board of the hospital's argument for closing obstetrics was partly because the volume of deliveries isn't sufficient to maintain the effectiveness of that unit. Roughly half of the women in Leamington currently are choosing to deliver in Windsor Regional Hospital in Windsor, but the gynecological services will be retained. The pre- and post-care services as well will be retained. In fact, they're adding beds. The proposal is to add beds at Leamington hospital in acute care and other aspects, to accommodate the needs of the region more.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Deputy Premier: A private company is trying to cut a deal with the Hamilton Port Authority to build a waste gasification plant on Hamilton's waterfront. Residents are very deeply concerned. This plant will use immature technology that, so far, exists only as demonstration projects. With no track record, we don't know the environmental impact and what it will be at full scale.

Will this government commit to a full environmental assessment on this proposal so that we can understand how it may affect our environment?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The environmental assessment process is determined independently by scientists and experts in the Ministry of the Environment. I don't think we want to politicize that process. I think the member opposite knows how that process works.

I am happy to meet with her, one on one, to get a bit of a briefing from her on what her concerns are. We'll be very responsive. We want to make sure that the people in Hamilton have high air quality and high water quality, and that any business activity on the waterfront is consistent with protecting the environment and protecting the people of Hamilton.

I just want to commend the Hamilton Port Authority. Just in the last couple of years, they've added 12 new businesses, and the Hamilton port has now emerged as one of the largest ports for food production and transmission. Coming out of the recession, this has been one of the largest job creators in Hamilton. We're very proud of that, and I'm sure the member opposite is as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Hamilton's airshed is already overburdened with pollutants. Now the government seems poised to allow a new, unproven technology, that relies on waste as a fuel, to contribute further to the pollutants in Hamilton's air. Children and families

deserve to breathe clean air, and it's up to this government to make sure that the quality of air and the people of Hamilton are being protected.

So I will ask one more time: Will this minister commit to a full environmental assessment to protect the air and the people of my community?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As the member opposite knows, you could not open this plant without an environmental assessment. So yes, of course there will be an environmental assessment.

I don't think we want to politicize these processes. I don't think any of us in this House are experts on this particular technology. The member opposite has said it's a new technology. It will be evaluated properly.

We have about the highest standards in North America right now on environmental protection. We're very proud of that. That's the legacy of this government and, quite frankly, her party in power as well.

This is the government here that closed all the coal plants, that has seen the largest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We have been leading in North America in almost every area of environmental protection, and we have no intention to back off our record on that. We take this very seriously.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario's nuclear facilities currently provide approximately 50% of electricity used by Ontarians. A number of our reactors are coming to the end of their life cycles.

I am aware that our government intends to upgrade our Darlington and Bruce nuclear facilities so that they continue to provide the province with reliable, safe and emissions-free power.

Minister, last week you toured the Ontario Power Generation, OPG, Darlington Nuclear Generating Station in my riding of Durham. The upgrade of the Darlington reactor is particularly important to me, as it represents a significant investment for the province as well as the very large number of people it will be creating jobs for in my riding.

Minister, could you please inform the House as to the status of the Darlington nuclear refurbishment?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member from Durham for raising this important question, particularly for his riding. Our government has put forward a long-term energy plan which includes refurbishing the nuclear reactors at Darlington and Bruce generating stations to ensure that we get the best value out of our existing infrastructure.

The refurbishment of Darlington will allow continued operation until 2055 at approximately 50% of the cost of building new nuclear. OPG is ensuring maximum efficiency in the Darlington refurbishment by allowing workers to train at a state-of-the-art training facility, including a full-scale training reactor.

Nuclear refurbishment will begin in 2016, and the plant upgrades will create almost 25,000 jobs and generate \$5 billion annually in economic activity.

1150

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for ensuring that our government is taking a significant step to ensure refurbishment in Darlington is done right. While OPG's Darlington generating station is one of the top performing nuclear stations in the world, it is still reassuring to hear that OPG will be subject to strict oversight to ensure safety, reliable supply and value for ratepayers.

During your tour last week, you stated that the government will hold OPG accountable and that we are committed to having refurbishment happen on time and on budget. Minister, could you please inform the House as to what other measures our government has in place to protect Ontario's ratepayers from cost overruns and to ensure the project moves forward on budget and on time?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we have full confidence that the project will hit its targets, and the refurbishment schedule is spread out to ensure that further refurbishments will only proceed after the successful completion of the first unit. Our plan has built appropriate off-ramps should operators be unable to deliver the projects on schedule and on budget. We've been very clear that we will not proceed if there are significant cost or schedule overruns. The province has an independent oversight adviser to monitor progress and spending at each stage of the development. Our nuclear refurbishment contracts ensure that operators and contractors are accountable for refurbishment costs and schedules. A nuclear refurbishment will ensure we have safe, reliable, affordable, emissions-free energy where and when we need it.

Ontario has an unblemished record of 40 years in nuclear power. We're among the safest in the world, and we have a tremendous supply chain—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

POVERTY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question today is for the minister responsible for the poverty reduction strategy.

On November 1, Ontarians once again saw an increase of 3.7% on their energy bills. Today, social housing assistance for energy costs is based on 1997 prices. This scale no longer reflects the current realities associated with the failed Liberal Green Energy Act and a decade of Liberal mismanagement.

Stakeholders such as the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association are asking your Liberal government for a more realistic utility scale, but to date have met with no success.

Minister, can you commit to including in your strategy an updated utility scale for social housing, and, more importantly, when will you get this done?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am delighted to be asked a question about the Poverty Reduction Strategy, because I have to say, this may be the first time, so thank you for asking about the strategy. I am hopeful that this question demonstrates a new focus from the opposition party, that reducing poverty actually does matter, because the history is not so good. They voted against the Ontario Child Benefit. They voted against all of the progressive initiatives, including most recently in this budget.

We continue to increase the Ontario Child Benefit. Our new Poverty Reduction Strategy sets a very ambitious but achievable goal of ending chronic homelessness. If I can now move forward with the confidence that I have the support of the opposition on this, I will be very, very, very pleased.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, we need achievable outcomes today, because people are going without heat. Minister, there's no excuse for turning a blind eye to today's problems that you know are hurting hard-working families across Ontario. Energy prices are going to continue to skyrocket. I'm currently hearing of residents who are using food banks so that they can save their scarce dollars to pay their utility bills. People are selling their homes because they can no longer afford to stay in them.

The United Way in my area announced last week that the utility assistance funding for 2014 is already dried up and waiting lists are running long. We don't even have an inch of snow yet, Minister.

So today, will you do the right thing, do the honourable thing, and commit right here, right now to resolve this shortfall before winter is here to stay? Do something today.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, Speaker, I am delighted to see this abrupt change in tone, because the PC Party actually, when they were in office, slashed social assistance by 22%. They froze ODSP, they froze social assistance benefits, they ended construction of social housing, they cut all funding for affordable housing, they even cancelled construction of units being built and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I happen to know that there are people here who need to sit for a vote.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors has done it again, and I won't tolerate it. You are warned.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Mr. Speaker, during the past election, they had a plan to slash social services that the most vulnerable people in this province depend on.

In our budget, which they voted against, we actually included in that budget that they voted against implementing a support program for low- to modest-income families that would provide—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

AWARDS TO MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, on a point of order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yesterday, the Professional Engineers Ontario were here. They award annually to a member of each caucus for their hard work, and I just wanted to acknowledge the member from York-Simcoe, the member from Kitchener-Waterloo and the Minister of Community and Social Services, who received the awards last night.

VISITOR

Miss Monique Taylor: One of my guests joined us since the beginning when the formal introductions happened, so I'd like to welcome Frank Miceli to Queen's Park today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we proceed, I would like to give you some sad news: that our pages are experiencing their last day today. I want to thank them for all the good, hard work that they've done.

Applause.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour/ Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'œuvre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1157 to 1202.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take their seats.

On November 5, Mr. Flynn moved third reading of Bill 18. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Bailey, Robert	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Naqvi, Yasir

Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Nicholls, Rick	Ballard, Chris	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Orazietti, David	Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Pettapiece, Randy	Bisson, Gilles	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Campbell, Sarah	Hudak, Tim	Potts, Arthur	Bradley, James J.	Horwath, Andrea	Orazietti, David
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq	Campbell, Sarah	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou	Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cimino, Joe	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz	Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Clark, Steve	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy	Cimino, Joe	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Scott, Peggy	Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario	Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet	Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles	Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter	Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.	Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique	Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Thompson, Lisa M.	Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiane
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiane	DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill	Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim	Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonnell, Jim	Wong, Soo	Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	
Fedeli, Victor	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.			
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakubski, John			
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David			

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 96; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1207 to 1208.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 22, Ms. Sandals moved second reading of Bill 10.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Thompson, Lisa M.
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Yakubski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 74; the nays are 22.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 5, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1211 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It's a special pleasure here today for us. We have our private member's bill a bit later, and we have some guests to share the day with us. I'd like to ask them to stand, please—they're all on my side—and I'll read their names as quickly as I can. David Honey is president of the Niagara Landowners Association. We have members from other county landowner association groups from across Ontario. All of these people fall into one of those categories, and I'll read their names: Moira Egan—please raise your hand—Stefanos Karatopis, Yvette Rath—Yvette was Bob Mackie's partner in life—Pat Irish, Donna Balcome, Preston Haskill, Rhonda Campbell Moon, Holly Nelson, Gregg Wilson, Roseanne Rutledge, Clarence Rutledge, Bruce Whitmore, Margaret Whitmore, Gerry Nicholls, James Scott, Ray Desmarais and Karl von Bloedau, who will be with us shortly.

Thank you, people, for being with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests. Further introductions?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm going to be moving a motion later on, my private member's bill, and I also have some special guests in the gallery right now. I'd like to ask Mayor Gordon Krantz, of Milton, to stand up and take a bow. Two more years and he'll be the longest-running mayor in Canada.

Also here today is someone I think you'll be familiar with: Bill Mann, CAO of Milton, also here while I read my private member's motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

The Speaker is allowed a little editorial leeway. Bill and I grew up together. We were two houses away from each other. He was going to be a politician, and I was going to be a CEO. So we switched roles. Welcome, Bill. Glad to see you here.

A point of order from the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

DISPLAY OF POSTER

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I request unanimous consent to allow me to show the poster of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair during my statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon is seeking unanimous consent to show her poster during statements. Do we agree? Agreed.

Unless there are last-minute introductions, it is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You've got a travelling billboard. I like that.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: With the able assistance of my colleague.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Vanna.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm honoured today to rise and recognize Cory Conley of Melancthon, in Dufferin-Caledon. Cory won this year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair poster competition. Cory's poster design is featured on the advertisements for the Royal, which runs from November 7 through to the 16th.

For the past 92 years, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair has been the largest combined indoor agricultural and equestrian show in the world. The Royal is the Olympics of the agricultural world. It is where distinguished breeders, exhibitors and growers from across the world come to compete and crown our champions. It's an honour for those who are selected to compete.

The poster competition was open to anyone across Canada. The Royal allows people to submit their artistry in any type of medium, such as painting, photography and drawings. In this year's search for a poster, the Royal

wanted artwork that focused on finding a poster that represented the rich history of the fair and its importance in Ontario. As you can see, Cory's poster depicts a cow, a sheep, a rooster and a horse.

Cory was happy that her artistry was chosen, especially because of her own family's long history in competing at the Royal. Cory said that her painting was a tribute to the world of agriculture and farming.

Once again, I'd like to congratulate Cory Conley on winning such a prestigious award.

See you at the fair.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm rising today to pay respects to the people who lost their lives to protect our freedoms. Remembrance Day is a special day each year that reminds us of this, and our resolve is especially strengthened this year, in light of recent events in Ottawa.

We heard statements from each of the parties this morning and paid our respects with a moment of silence.

When I go back to my riding this coming week, I plan to further pay respects by attending Remembrance Day ceremonies and events in Devlin, Fort Frances, Manitou Rapids First Nations, Emo and Rainy River. Alongside people across Kenora-Rainy River, I will be laying wreaths at these ceremonies. With each wreath that we lay, we honour the sacrifice made by so many people who died in the line of duty. Members of the Armed Forces have been honoured on this day since the end of the First World War, and I am very privileged to be participating in the ceremonies in this way.

Remembrance Day is also a day when veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members, RCMP officers and cadets are more visible to all of us in their full uniforms, and this gives us an opportunity to appreciate them unlike any other day of the year. We are humbled by their commitment to the security of the nation and their unrelenting courage.

On Remembrance Day, I'm very much looking forward to standing alongside the people in Kenora-Rainy River, and I hope to see many proudly wearing the red poppy.

Lest we forget.

GURU NANAK DEV JI GURPURAB

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in this House to recognize a very special day for Sikhs in Canada and all over the world: Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurpurab. Today we're celebrating the birth of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism is still based on his teachings and those of the nine living gurus who followed him. Our 11th guru is the Guru Granth Sahib, our holy scripture, a forever-lasting testament of his teachings.

Guru Nanak promoted a society without discrimination and advocated for gender equality and empowerment

of women. He taught us to believe in hard work and honesty and to share with those who are less fortunate.

Speaker, I will be participating in several Gurburab events this evening in my riding of Brampton–Springdale. I'm looking forward to the festivities and seeing many of my constituents, with whom I will eat, pray and celebrate.

Today is a special day to celebrate cultural diversity in our great province. Let us join together and celebrate Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurburab.

LOST AIRMEN IN MUSKOKA PROJECT

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in this House today to recognize an extraordinary effort undertaken in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Over the past week, the Royal Canadian Air Force has been leading operations on Lake Muskoka to recover a World War II-era aircraft that was lost over 70 years ago. The Northrop Nomad aircraft number 3521 crashed into Lake Muskoka on December 13, 1940, killing Lieutenant Peter Campbell and Leading Aircraftsman Theodore Bates.

I would personally like to recognize the efforts of the Lost Airmen in Muskoka Project, who located the plane in 2007, and others who made the recovery a reality, including: the president of LAMP, Matt Fairbrass; Ron Brent; Al Bacon; Bracebridge Legion Branch 161; and many, many other community volunteers—as well as the OPP dive team who discovered the aircraft in 2010 and the Royal Canadian Navy Fleet Diving Unit, who recovered the remains of the two airmen in 2013. With the many groups involved, one can appreciate how the success of this project has truly been a combined effort.

An event was held this past Monday, November 3, to display the wreckage before transporting it to the National Air Force Museum of Canada in Trenton, where future generations will be able to experience this piece of local wartime history. I was fortunate enough to see the recovered pieces of the aircraft myself this past weekend.

This being Remembrance Week, I can think of no more fitting time to pay tribute to those who served our country and to those whose efforts, as with the Lost Airmen in Muskoka Project, continue to help remind future generations of the immense sacrifice made by Canadians.

PRINCESS PATRICIA'S CANADIAN LIGHT INFANTRY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to speak about the centennial year of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. This year, 2014, marks the 100th year of the regiment formed in 1914 to fight in World War I. They have since been an integral part of every major Canadian campaign.

While the regiment's headquarters are in western Canada, I am proud to say that many Patricias call London home.

To commemorate the centennial, a display team and a baton relay team made stops between Edmonton and Ottawa, including a stop in London, showcasing the regiment's history from World War I to the present day, bringing the past to life. They also carried a roll of honour that lists the 1,866 Patricias who have sacrificed their lives over the past hundred years. It was truly a touching tribute to the men and women of the Patricias and Canada's Armed Forces.

1310

In light of Remembrance Day and the recent fatal attacks on members of our Armed Forces right here in Canada, the centennial celebration of the Patricias has served as a timely reminder of the immense sacrifice of past, present and future Canadian soldiers, lest we forget the dedication of the men and women who have fought and secured our freedom with their lives.

TREES OF CARING

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Earlier today in my riding of Cambridge, a holiday tradition reached its 26th year as the Trees of Caring were lit once more. Each year, Cambridge Memorial Hospital has lit several trees with lights, each one representing a donation made to support our hospital. This year will be no different, as this morning the Trees of Caring kickoff was held at Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

As the holiday season progresses, many people, myself included, enjoy passing by and seeing an increased number of lights with each passing day, knowing their donations will purchase new equipment.

This year, as our government recently celebrated the groundbreaking of the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion, the fundraising efforts take on a new tone, raising money for the new and expanded sections which are now being built.

As the only hospital in Cambridge and North Dumfries, Cambridge Memorial is critically important to the livelihood of our community and the over 130,000 people that it serves.

Speaker, I want to say thank you to all the hospital staff and to wish the hospital foundation senior staff, including Jennifer White, the executive director, and Lori Muzak McComb, the senior development officer, all the best with this year's fundraising efforts.

I'll be enjoying seeing the lights go on at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, and I look forward to seeing the Trees of Caring tradition continue for many years to come.

MILTON COURTHOUSE

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to represent the people of the town of Halton Hills in this Legislature. It has come to my attention that we need a new consolidated courthouse in Milton to serve the region of Halton.

Earlier this year, I was copied on a letter to Ms. Laura Oliver, president of the Halton County Law Association, from Paul Stunt, a lawyer in Oakville. He outlined the need for “a new and adequate court facility to serve the residents of Halton region.” In response, I gave him a call and suggested he invite the Halton area MPPs for a tour of the existing, inadequate court facilities in Milton. He agreed. I was seeking to have the opportunity to tour the courthouse on September 10 and later to attend a town hall meeting of courthouse users, including lawyers, judges and staff.

I understand that the other Halton MPPs—my colleagues—are scheduled to be touring the courthouse next week. As always, I am prepared to work co-operatively across party lines with other Halton MPPs to encourage the government to approve the new courthouse we need in Halton.

I've also discussed this issue directly with the Attorney General and our Attorney General critic, and I appreciate their genuine interest.

We are seeking a briefing with ministry staff on the approval process for new courthouses, and I look forward to hearing confirmation from the AG's office, as I hope we can have this briefing as soon as it can be possibly set up.

Let's work together and get this done.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: On November 11, we will pause to mark Remembrance Day, but a lot of young people often ask the question, “What exactly are we remembering?” My three children, who are now in their 20s, used to ask the same question when they were much younger. As a parent, I wanted to help them find a way to understand the significance of Remembrance Day and the commitment made by Canadian men and women, many of whom paid with their lives protecting the freedoms that we enjoy today.

About 15 years ago on Remembrance Day, we visited the Legion in Kitchener, branch number 50. At the entrance, there's a wall where, etched in stone, are the names of local soldiers who lost their lives in battle. Together, we looked for the name “Fred Tucker.” That's their great-uncle, who died at the age of 23 in Holland. He was killed just a couple of days before the war in Europe ended.

That visit to the Legion to look for Uncle Fred's name became an annual tradition for our family. It helped my children make a personal connection, understanding why brave Canadians serve their country. I know that many of us have stories like this as part of our family folklore. Perhaps it was a relative who served in a battle long ago, or maybe someone in a more recent conflict.

I urge you: If you have the opportunity to help a young person reflect on the meaning of Remembrance Day, do share your stories and help them appreciate why it is that we remember.

POLISH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I rise today to pay tribute and remember those who have served and those who have fallen in the service of their country, freedom and independence.

Of course, to Canadians November 11 marks a solemn day of remembrance. However, this day also marks Polish Independence Day. At the end of World War I, Poland was allowed to regain her independence after 123 years of partition by the Russian Empire, Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On November 11, 1918, the Second Polish Republic was founded under the leadership of Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

For Polish Canadians and Poles worldwide, the celebration of the November 11 Independence Day is a tangible reminder of the real reasons why just nations must sometimes take up arms for the preservation of a country, a national identity and, ultimately, freedom from oppression or domination of itself or other nations.

For us in Canada, Polish Independence Day also serves as a reminder of what this nation's brave men and women fought for in the Great War: the preservation of freedom and independence. For Poland, that freedom and independence was short-lived, and once again Poland and the world were plunged into armed conflict during World War II. Canadians, Poles and many others once again took up arms, side by side, in defence of freedom. That freedom for Poland was not fully regained until 1989.

Canadians and Poles were staunch allies, and Polish Canadians thank all Canadians who served not just in the defence of this country but of Poland.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

“Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

“Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

“Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman.”

I support the petition and give my petition to page Alex.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the minister responsible for the Pan and Parapan American Games has a point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to introduce a good friend, Peter Rogers, who's visiting us here at the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order, but welcome.

Petitions.

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

I sign this petition and give it to page Ben to deliver to the table.

1320

LEGAL AID

Mr. Chris Ballard: Mr. Speaker, this is a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly regarding population-based legal services funding.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the" 2013-14 "budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I'll sign that and give it to page Adam.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition here that's signed by people right across this great province of Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Speaker, I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to Rachel to bring up to the Clerk.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I sign my name to this petition and give it to page Ben to deliver to the table.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

BOB MACKIE ACT, 2014

LOI BOB MACKIE DE 2014

Mr. MacLaren moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and to make a related amendment to the Ministry of Natural Resources Act /
Projet de loi 32, Loi visant à abroger la Loi sur la planification et l'aménagement de l'escarpement du Niagara et à apporter une modification connexe à la Loi sur le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell you the story of Bob Mackie. I met Bob in 2007. This was the year the Niagara Landowners Association had their founding meeting. This was the year that the dark body called the Niagara Escarpment Commission intruded into Bob's life. This was the year that Bob's use and enjoyment of his private property began to end. This was the year that Bob's seven-year battle in court began. And 2014 was the year that Bob

Mackie died. His heart couldn't take it any longer. The stress killed him.

What terrible thing did Bob Mackie do that would make government think it was in the public interest to persecute him in court for seven years? What heinous crime did he commit? Bob's awful offence against the people, against the crown, against the government that required the full-force infliction of the law in order that justice should be seen to be done was that he dared to operate a small archery training facility on his nine-acre rural property where he lived, near the town of Beamsville. It doesn't get much worse than that. Thank God for the law.

Bob loved archery, and he was very good at it. So he set up a shooting range with targets and fake deer, bears and racoons in his nine-acre backyard. He also had two mobile trailers in his backyard for indoor target practice in the winter months or on rainy days. Bob gave archery lessons to schoolchildren, Boy Scouts, members of the Brain Injury Community Re-Entry program, adults; in other words, anyone who enjoyed archery.

Bob's archery training facility was the only one in the local community, and he had the full support of the people in his community and of the municipality. Unfortunately, his next-door neighbour decided to lodge a complaint against Bob with the Niagara Escarpment Commission because of noise and traffic. Archery does not make noise and there were never more than five or six cars at Bob's place at any one time.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission decided that Bob had committed a crime. The Niagara Escarpment Plan showed that Bob's nine-acre property was agricultural, and nowhere in the Niagara Escarpment Plan did it say that archery was a permitted use in an agricultural operation. It did not say that archery was not permitted; it just didn't mention archery at all. The NEC ruled that archery was not permitted on Bob's land, and therefore he must stop his archery lessons and remove his two mobile trailers. Martin Kilian, planning staff at the Niagara Escarpment Commission, was instrumental in making this decision.

1330

The order was written that Bob Mackie must end his archery business. Bob decided not to comply with the order. He knew he was doing nothing wrong. He knew he had loyal customers who appreciated his archery training, and he enjoyed teaching archery to his customers.

Bob hired lawyers and spent seven years in court fighting the Niagara Escarpment Commission. In the last year, his lawyer, Terry Green of Ottawa, was on a winning track with a strategy that looked like it would win in court. Unfortunately, Bob died before he could see that winning day in court. As well, the court case died with Bob.

Bob was a man of principle who believed in fighting for his rights, and he did that right to the end. Those of us who knew Bob were very proud to call him our friend, and we admired him for his values and strong sense of what is right. Bob was one of the founding members of

the Niagara Landowners Association and, for the last year, was president. Bob and the Niagara Landowners Association helped many local people who were victims of government bullies—people like Dave White and Mark Barnfield, who were fighting frivolous, wrongful charges by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority for doing routine maintenance on their land, such as filling in a shallow puddle to level the soil. Both men were strong, fought for their rights in court and represented themselves. With the help of Bob and the Niagara Landowners Association, they won.

Jim Williams, an 88-year-old landowner who lived near Beamsville, died on April 19, 2013, of a heart attack brought on by the stress of being harassed and threatened by a Niagara Escarpment Commission enforcement bully named O.J. Macdonald. Enforcer O.J. Macdonald was aggressive and disrespectful of Mr. Williams, who was a war veteran and a long-time resident of Beamsville. The enforcer marched all around Mr. Williams's private property and told him he couldn't have his old sawmill on his property; it had been there since 1957. He couldn't pile lumber on his property; lumber is what you get from a sawmill. He couldn't bring in a few loads of soil from his neighbour's place to fill in a few gullies caused by natural erosion, which any responsible landowner would do.

By the way, his 85-year-old wife, Beth, couldn't sell dresses from a room in her house. She had had a dress shop in town for 30 years.

Is that what we mean by law and order? Is that what you would you call good government? I think not. When people are afraid of government, when government starts to hurt good people, when government starts to trample upon people's private property rights, then government is wrong, and the people need to take back their rights. Thank goodness Bob Mackie and the Niagara Landowners Association were there last year to stand by Jim Williams and support him against the Niagara Escarpment enforcer bully.

Ken Lucyshyn of Walker Industries told me the story of his 10-year fight with the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Ken spent 10 years and \$10 million to expand Walker's existing quarry. At the end of the process, Walker was forced to go through another hoop, a judicial review at Osgoode Hall, that was brought on by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Niagara Escarpment Commission had been infiltrated by special interest groups that wanted to stop the quarry expansion. It cost another million dollars—and we wonder why infrastructure construction costs so much money, we wonder why housing costs so much money and we wonder why small operators are driven out of business. This is not the way government should be operating. Government should be helping businesses that are trying to build our communities. We need the aggregate.

The Bob Mackie Act will repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. This means that never again will the Niagara Escarpment Commission be able to prohibit a landowner from practising archery or

operating an archery training facility on his private property. This righting of a wrong will be Bob Mackie's legacy. It is a large step forward towards restoring private property rights in Ontario. It is the beginning of a change that is long overdue. It is the beginning of reversing the tide of creeping socialism that has been slowly taking away our property rights for decades. It is the beginning of restoring the strength and good character that is needed to respect the values of our British Christian cultural heritage of freedom, democracy, common-law and private property rights that date back to the Magna Carta of 1215.

Our freedom and democracy were hard-fought for in wars and Parliaments over centuries. Freedom can only be assured in a democracy that is founded on the principle of private property rights, where these rights are secured absolutely by law. Bob Mackie's property rights were denied. We can never let that happen again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm rising today to discuss the Niagara Escarpment. As I'm sure most of you realize, the Niagara Escarpment runs through my riding of Niagara Falls. It should come as no surprise that the escarpment is well known, not only in my riding but across the country. In fact, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization named it as one of 16 World Biosphere Reserves located in Canada. We only have five others in this country at this time.

The international community and our federal and provincial communities came together and committed to maintain the Niagara Escarpment and the land in its vicinity. They made sure that this area would stay a natural environment and ensured that development that occurs on this land is compatible with the natural development of the area.

The bill we're discussing today would affect the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, which was passed by the Bill Davis government in June 1973. The bill was designed to protect the escarpment, which is 725 kilometres of land, stretching right up to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. All of the governments after that continued this plan, until Mike Harris. The commission was almost dismantled under his watch. The budget was cut, and one third of the staff was let go, though the developers did well as they were appointed to the board that was left behind. This board even tried to undo the international protection of the land. A lot of this was undone by Premier Ernie Eves, who replaced a number of the developers on the board.

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Though the Liberals were a bit more supportive, they also contributed to destroying part of the escarpment. It was under their watch that large developers like Highland Companies began to buy up escarpment properties with a plan to turn them into quarries, destroying everything around them and wrecking the land for future generations.

The Niagara Escarpment commissioners voted to ask the province to end all aggregate extraction on the Niag-

ara Escarpment. But this government hasn't been responsive in the past, and there's no reason to believe that they'll step up and defend the escarpment in the future.

The bill we're here to discuss today was originally put forward as Bill 32 and then named after Mr. Bob Mackie. I didn't know Mr. Mackie personally, but I've been told he was a very good man who loved archery. The original intent of Bill 32 was to allow for archery ranges to be put on escarpment land, after a long battle between Mr. Mackie and the Niagara Escarpment Commission. As you can see, there's a lot of history when it comes to the escarpment.

What makes this protected land so important? The escarpment is home to forests, farms, recreational areas, some of the best scenic views in all of Canada, wetlands, rolling hills, beautiful waterfalls like Ball's Falls, mineral resources, wildlife, historic sites, and villages, towns and cities. It's one of the best-preserved areas of land we have in the entire province, an area that was set aside so our grandchildren and their grandchildren could appreciate the beauty of this great province and this beautiful country. I believe that what the Niagara Escarpment offers to the world is something that benefits us all in this great province. Around 40% of Ontario's rare flowers are found in the escarpment, along with a number of rare birds and reptiles.

Many of you here know that it's home to Canada's longest and oldest footpath, the Bruce Trail. I'm sure that there are many of my colleagues here who have probably been to the Bruce Trail. I am personally familiar with the trail. Not to date myself here, but I can remember walking the Bruce Trail as a kid—a long, long time ago.

This is important: When the Bob Mackie Act was originally introduced, it was to allow archery ranges on agricultural land. This is also important. But this bill is completely different from that bill. In fact, this bill makes no sense at all. Instead of allowing for archery ranges on agricultural land in the escarpment, this bill would pave the way for a wholesale destruction of the area. Mr. Mackie was originally proposing that an archery range be allowed to run on his land. An archery range wouldn't have destroyed the land around his property. Now they're trying to attach his name to a bill that would replace the forests and the rivers with mega quarries; a bill that would see fragile environments destroyed and replaced by whatever project that developers feel would make the most money.

This is an area that no developer should get their hands on. There are lots of places in the province of Ontario that developers can develop and make lots of money; this is not one of them. It would be a great mistake if we allowed this to happen in this House.

There's nothing in this bill that would protect this wonderful area. Actually reading what's in this bill—it repeals the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. Let me say this again: It repeals the entire act, which has protected the escarpment for almost 40 years. For the profits of a few companies, we would destroy one of the province's most beautiful and historic tracts of

land. Why? I say "why" to my colleagues. Why would anybody in Ontario, whether you're a Liberal, a Conservative or an NDPer, want to support destroying this? It makes no sense to me. All the skiing, the camping, the swimming, the fishing, the boating, the hiking and the preservation would be gone. Gone. The intent is a lot worse than the intent of the original bill.

I know that in some areas affected by the escarpment, the landowners have had some issues from local conservation authorities. The conservation authorities have had some major problems, and there is definitely room to discuss their business. But at the end of the day, it benefits everyone in Ontario when we have authorities, commissioners, boards and agencies out there protecting our natural environment; when these groups stand up for the land we have done a good job of protecting all these years. The generations before us fought for this land and protected it. We owe it to the generations that follow all of us to make sure that we do the same.

To be honest, I'm not entirely sure where these changes in the bill come from. Quite frankly, nobody should take this seriously.

The Liberals shouldn't be smug about this either. They've done very little to protect the escarpment.

What we do know is that this land contains some of the most beautiful and historic pieces of land not only in this province but the entire country—the entire country. That's why the international community designated the land the way they did. It benefits our tourist industry when people come from all over the world to see it. It benefits our farmers, who take advantage of the rich soil found on the escarpment. Simply put, right now it benefits the people of Ontario.

We've seen representatives stand up and fight against quarry production in the past. We know that megaquarries will destroy everything past generations have worked so hard to protect. We also know that the damage would be permanent.

I can't see any reason why any Liberal, Conservative or NDPer would ever take the escarpment away from our future generations—from our kids and our grandkids. They're the ones who would be losing out because of this bill. Let's put this proposal aside and come up with ways we can work together to make sure the escarpment benefits everyone from Ontario and remains an important landmark for generations to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It is my pleasure to stand in my place today and join the member opposite, the member for Niagara Falls, and discuss the beauty and the precious value of the Niagara Escarpment.

It's somewhat ironic that I find myself in this position today, having just come from an event where the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation honoured Ontarians for their advocacy in the protection of precious lands throughout our province, including the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges moraine and, of course, the greenbelt. Indeed, one of the honourees, I'm proud to say, is a former sitting

member of this House, the former member of provincial Parliament for Scarborough East, whose work on Save the Rouge Valley System is well and broadly known. That celebration, in light of the topic we're about to discuss today, strikes me as passing ironic.

As Ontarians, we enjoy some of the best natural geographic heritage in the world; heritage that must be protected for future generations.

Bill 32 would repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, a piece of legislation that is designed to protect the sensitive ecosystems found all along the Niagara Escarpment. The repeal of this act would result in the immediate abolishment of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, instruments which protect and maintain the Niagara Escarpment. When this bill was originally tabled in March, it had a much different intention, but it now has grown into something much more.

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Ontario's Niagara Escarpment is a working countryside and a significant component of Ontario's greenbelt. I am proud to say it is of cherished value to the citizens in my riding of Burlington and, indeed, in the neighbouring riding of my colleague the member for Halton. It is recognized both provincially and internationally as a significant landform, with a strong system of development control in place to guide development in its area. Land use control is achieved through the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Canada's first green plan, a visionary land use plan which was conceived in 1973 by the Ontario government, under the leadership of former Premier Bill Davis, through the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development act.

The escarpment is also a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, a designation that in part recognizes land use plans and development controls for areas with unique and sensitive landform characteristics. It is one of only 16 biosphere reserves in Canada and a part of a network of 631 in 19 countries. Little wonder that our Niagara Escarpment is so cherished and so desperately in need of our protection.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan is an important piece of a broader policy framework that balances the protection of our environment with a responsible approach to planning our communities.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, along with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry—of which I am proud to say I am parliamentary assistant—the Niagara Escarpment Commission and other partner ministries are working together to determine how to co-ordinate reviews of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges moraine plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the official growth plan.

Our government remains committed to protecting the Niagara Escarpment, and so the province is carefully considering options for the scope and timing of this review, during which we will engage and consult with municipalities, stakeholders and aboriginal communities. I would encourage members of this Legislature and their

constituents to participate in these important reviews. I feel that when discussing a topic as important as the Niagara Escarpment, it is vital to understand the history and significance of the area in order to fully appreciate the implications of the decisions we make.

When the Niagara Escarpment Plan was passed in 1985, it raised the standard for environmental planning in Ontario and Canada as a whole and set an example for the rest of the world.

The Niagara Escarpment is truly one of Canada's foremost scenic landforms. The escarpment soars 510 metres at its highest point and stretches 725 kilometres from the beauty of Niagara to Tobermory. Having joined the thousands of Ontarians who have cycled in the Halton Hills and beyond, I can tell you that it is indeed a formidable and majestic climb. It is a rich mosaic of land uses, including farms, recreation areas, forests, cliffs, streams, wetlands, mineral resources and historic sites. Preserving these environmentally sensitive lands in Ontario will be an ongoing challenge, to be sure, but one that is of utmost importance.

The escarpment also includes the Bruce Trail, Canada's oldest and longest continuous footpath, reaching from Queenston Heights to Tobermory and going through my riding of Burlington and the riding of my colleague the member for Halton—very important areas, Mr. Speaker, not to be trifled with.

The area includes some of the province's best skiing, camping, swimming, fishing, boating and hiking areas, as well as boasting a successful wine industry, all of which contribute to a diverse tourism industry. The Niagara Escarpment contributes an astounding \$100 million to local and regional economies through tourism every year.

Perhaps one of the most important features of the escarpment is the diverse and crucial wildlife habitat that it offers. It contains more than 300 species of birds, 53 mammals, 36 reptiles and amphibians, 90 species of fish and 100 varieties of special-interest flora, including 37 types of wild orchids. Amongst these species are 55 species at risk—canaries in the coal mine. Thirty-two are listed as endangered, 20 as threatened and three of special concern. This only goes to underline the importance of the Niagara Escarpment and ensuring that it is protected.

The area also includes many agricultural operations, which will become even more important as we deal with the effects of climate change, a rapidly growing population, expanding urban areas and increasing demands. Food security and the livelihood of our agri-food industry is an ever-growing concern and we need to take it seriously.

Repealing the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act would open up the entire area to potential development. This could put even more pressure on species at risk that are already having a tough-enough time trying to survive. Valuable farmland could be lost, forcing us to rely more heavily on food imports.

This area needs special protections, and right now it has that. To do away with all of that would not simply be

the wrong decision; it would be irresponsible. Ultimately, it is our responsibility as legislators to preserve this province and everything that it has to offer for future generations, and Bill 32 does just the opposite.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'd like to take this opportunity to participate in this afternoon's debate on Bill 32. Bill 32, if passed, would repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and, by extension, repeal the Niagara Escarpment Commission. I will not be supporting Bill 32 because, while every agency, board and commission can and should be reviewed regularly and updated, eliminating the NEC is not the solution.

From Tobermory to Niagara Falls, the Niagara Escarpment runs through my riding, north to south, in Dufferin-Caledon. Because of its unique geological feature, as other members have mentioned, the NE was designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. To put this in perspective, there are only 16 other UNESCO World Biosphere Reserves across Canada. This prestigious designation gives an area international recognition for the important ecological and/or cultural values in the area. Here, in this Legislature, we should feel honoured to have such an important geological feature in Ontario. We also, by extension, have a responsibility to protect it.

To put it in perspective, other UNESCO World Biosphere Reserves include Yellowstone National Park, which was the first national park in the world and one of the first biosphere reserves. Another example is Everglades National Park in Florida, which is the largest designated subtropical wilderness reserve in North America and is home to one of the most diverse and complex ecosystems in the world. Another famous UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve is the Galapagos Islands, which are best known for their population of giant tortoises, and are of course where Charles Darwin formulated his theory of evolution. The Niagara Escarpment is part of this very exclusive club.

I agree that there are some challenges with the current NEC, and certainly there are areas within the permitting process within the NEC that need to be clarified and updated, but we should not be repealing the NEC, as it was created to preserve and cherish this unique landscape. Can we improve transparency and ensure proper oversight? Absolutely. Can the NEC planning and approval process be improved through clearer direction on the roles and responsibilities of the NEC and their board members? Absolutely. But does this mean throwing out the entire concept behind the NEC? No. That is why I cannot support this bill in its current form.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I didn't know Bob Mackie; condolences to Mr. Mackie's friends and relatives who are here today.

I can't support the bill, because I do sleep better at night knowing that there are authorities out there—conservation authorities, commissions, boards and agen-

cies—that work hard to save our natural environment from ourselves. We owe it to our ancestors and to our children and grandchildren to leave the world in no worse condition than when we found it. I believe that what's on the table would decimate the Niagara Escarpment, something that I value—and I hope that most of us in this room today would do so.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask everyone in the chamber to help me in welcoming, in the members' gallery, former MPP Ruth Grier, member for Etobicoke in the 33rd Parliament and Etobicoke-Lakeshore in the 34th and 35th Parliaments. Welcome.

Further debate.

1400

Hon. James J. Bradley: I will be speaking against this particular bill, which abolishes the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Niagara Escarpment Commission is a legacy of Premier William Davis and Mr. Norm Sterling, who was in the cabinet at that time, responsible for the development of this plan.

This has had multi-partisan support over the years—almost unanimous support. It has gone through several Premiers. Some you wouldn't even expect to be supportive of the Niagara Escarpment Commission have been. I have been a strong supporter of it—of the preservation of agricultural land, of the preservation of environmental and natural resources that we need in this province.

One of my colleagues who was in the Niagara Peninsula recently said he looked up and saw the Niagara Escarpment and how beautiful it looked. There are many people out there who would love to see hotels on it, skiing resorts on it, commercial developments on it and residential developments on it.

This is a real gem. It's a biosphere reserve. It's something we in this generation have an obligation to maintain for future generations in this province.

There has been support from all political parties. I think of David Tilson, who was a predecessor to the member, who was here at that time—a very strong supporter. Premier Peterson, Premier Rae and Ruth Grier, who is in the gallery here today, all have been very strong supporters of it.

One of the problems that we have happening in many jurisdictions is a loss of land. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. I think it was Will Rogers who one time said, "They're not making it anymore."

I look at the Niagara Peninsula, for instance, which used to be a place—a gem—for tender-fruit farming. Today we have development all over it—a big mistake for future generations.

The amount of arable land that there is left in Canada, and in the province of Ontario, is very limited. I know we think our province looks big and our country looks big, but the land where you have climatic conditions and soil conditions where you can actually grow agricultural products is very limited. We do not want to be reliant upon others.

So I pay tribute to those who previously established this, with the support of everyone—established the

Niagara Escarpment Commission. Mr. Sterling was very passionate about this when he came to this House and when he was part of the Davis cabinet. Premier Davis has received accolades from many people over the years for having this plan come forward. As I say, subsequent to that, Premier Peterson was supportive; Premier Rae was supportive; Premier Harris was supportive. I've got to confess to you that I thought, when Premier Harris's government came in, we might see some substantial changes taking place. They avoided that, and for that I commend them. I think of John Snobelen, for instance, who was a minister at that time and did not make the kind of changes that some people in the province were advocating at that time.

If you go into Pennsylvania or New York state—we always think they're states with a lot of population and so on and that it's going to be wall-to-wall development. Go through Pennsylvania, go down some of the highways in Pennsylvania and you will see large tracts of rural land—beautiful landscape. If you start to erode that, if you take it away, if you give it to local people—there are a lot of people at the local level who will not be satisfied until they've paved every last square centimetre of property. Then they will say they've reached paradise. Well, I think the overwhelming majority of people in this House do not believe that, and I want to commend those who in years gone by have been protectors—first of all, establishing the Niagara Escarpment Commission and then protectors of it.

The world looks upon this as being a major gem that we have. It's something that when you lose it, you cannot get it back. When you allow the development to take place where it's appropriate, what happens is that you can't pull those buildings out. You can't get the bulldozers back, pushing the soil back in and restoring it. It's very, very difficult to do that. So I will certainly be in opposition to this resolution.

I should say, by the way, when I was first elected to this House, one of my colleagues from Grey county put forward a similar motion to this House. I don't even know if it was alone, but I stood against that resolution at that time, against the resolution that would have abolished the Niagara Escarpment Commission, because I think it's exceedingly important.

Are there changes that have to be made from time to time? Yes. Is there a review of its mandate? Yes. But this is something we should preserve, and I implore all members of this House to unanimously reject this particular proposal.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, in my role of PC critic for Senate and democratic reform, I have become alarmed at the proliferation of agencies, boards and commissions and the increased delegation of governance authority to these agencies, boards and commissions from the provincial government.

Referred to in the 2012 provincial budget as “delegated administrative authorities,” or in the activist com-

munity as the “technocracy,” there is increasing concern expressed by citizens across the province, and indeed across the country, about the creation and buildup of a vast, unelected, unaccountable technocratic bureaucracy to micromanage every aspect of our lives. Canada is supposedly a free country, yet over the last several decades we have watched as governments at all levels have slowly but steadily eroded our common-law rights and freedoms.

Of course, one of the key foundations of the success of western developed nations is private property rights. The ability to buy and use land is what lures immigrants from around the world to settle here. It is the Canadian dream to buy and own a single-family dwelling to raise your family, yet since the 1970s, social engineers have seized the planning process and used it to control and restrict land, land use and availability.

This is a province where 87% of all our land is crown land, yet the provincial government has been crowding us into high-density development using a variety of excuses. First it was to house the poor, then it was to house young urban professionals, and now the excuse is to save the environment.

Currently, people seem to have lost the basic common understanding of the importance of private property rights to maintaining freedom, creating prosperity, and protecting the environment. Many people seem to think that the private property owners, without rigorous government oversight, will intentionally destroy their property and the environment. Nothing could be further from the truth. The vast majority of private property owners go to great lengths to care for and improve their property.

That is what Bob Mackie did. He invested in his property to enhance the environment and his customers' experience. For that high crime, he was persecuted through the courts for seven long years, a persecution that eventually cost his life.

So today, not only do I advocate for the repeal of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, but also for authority delegated to agencies, boards and commissions to be repatriated back to the provincial government so that elected representatives can be held accountable for their decisions. It is unconscionable for elected representatives to wash their hands of the actual job of governing. If the provincial government wants to meddle in local planning and politics, they need to do the work themselves, not pass the buck. This is a critical issue if we are to win our rights and freedoms back, rights and freedoms that many of our ancestors fought for and died for.

Ask the high school kids and college kids if they want to be micromanaged by self-appointed experts. Ask them if they want to raise their future families in a high-rise condominium apartment or a house. Ask them if they should be able to defend themselves if they are bullied or attacked. Ask them if the government should decide what food and how much of it they should be allowed to eat. Ask them if they want to maintain their common-law rights and freedoms or be impoverished by an out-of-

touch centralized government. I suggest that the vast majority of school kids don't want to be continuously bullied by intrusive controlling government for the rest of their lives.

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What we do today will have grave consequences for future generations. It is time to begin dismantling the technocracy and give back to people the power to plan and live their lives as they see fit. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'd like to stand on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say a very quick welcome—they're just leaving—to Netivot HaTorah Day School.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Last call for further debate?

Then I recognize the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills. You have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the members who have contributed to the debate today from St. Catharines, Windsor–Tecumseh, Niagara Falls, Burlington and Dufferin–Caledon.

The Bob Mackie Act will repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. This is a significant change. It is the right thing to do. We will be restoring private property rights, rights Bob Mackie was denied.

I ask each member of this House, this special democratic place where we have the privilege and responsibility of making decisions that govern the people of Ontario, to think carefully about the decision you are about to make; to think as an individual member and set party interests aside for a moment; to think about the importance and even the sanctity of that special place that is most important to each of us, and that is home. That is the special place where we live with our families, our loved ones. That is the special place where we go each night to rest and enjoy our families. That is the special place where we like to think we have rights, more rights than anyone else, because it is our home, and think how that special right and that special place called home needs to be protected.

As individual elected representatives, we each of us on our own have great power. Each man and woman has the absolute power of being a majority of one. I ask that each of you exercise the power as a majority of one—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

Orders of the day.

PAN AM AND PARAPAN AM GAMES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I move that, in the opinion of this House, we should all join together to celebrate the success and strength of our athletes and mark the positive legacy of the upcoming Pan and Parapan American Games in 2015 by recognizing July 2015 as

Pan Am Month and August 2015 as Parapan Month in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Naidoo-Harris has moved private member's notice of motion number seven. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to begin by just acknowledging some other guests that I didn't get a chance to acknowledge earlier on. I would like to acknowledge Tom Saras, of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, who is in the gallery. I'd also like to acknowledge Karen Miceli, who's with the Milton Canadian Champion; Laura Steiner, with the Milton Villager; and Seema Bakshi, from my office.

Mr. Speaker, we're just months away from the start of the Pan American and Parapan American Games in this province, and you can already start to feel the excitement in the air. Like most people in this House and across our province, I enjoy watching athletes compete at the highest level. Seeing the world's best compete allows each of us to see the best we can achieve. It shows us what we are all capable of if we work hard and strive for the top. We can't all run the 100 metres in 10 seconds. We can't all throw a discus 67 metres or score 8,000 points in the decathlon. But we can all devote ourselves to goals and follow the example of these athletes striving for perfection.

That perfection is something we will all get to experience and see next summer. That's why the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games next year are something so many Ontarians are looking forward to, including the residents in my riding of Halton. These games will transform communities in Ontario; I know they will transform my community. But perhaps most importantly, they will transform all of us into one big community during the months of July and August in the summer of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, if this motion to proclaim the months of July and August 2015 Pan Am Month and Parapan Month, respectively, moves forward, it will move everyone in this province forward together. No matter where you live in Ontario, no matter what your age, no matter where you come from, we will all cheer together with one voice. We will gather in living rooms, pubs and stadiums around the province to cheer on our athletes and celebrate our Ontario. After the roar in the stadiums, at the velodrome and around the swimming pools dies down, the sound of the Pan Am Games will echo on long after in our hearts and in our minds.

These games are what Ontario is all about. They celebrate the different cultures, different peoples and different abilities throughout the two Americas, all welcomed here into our extraordinarily open and accepting community—our Ontario. We will be cheering on our Ontario athletes and our other Canadian athletes, but we will be supporting and encouraging all the athletes who come here to strive for excellence. That's why making a special designation for July and August of 2015 is so important.

I attended a one-year countdown event in my Halton riding this past July, and you could feel the excitement

building in the air over the upcoming games. It was clear to me that Halton residents, young and old, were looking forward to taking part and playing host to a major international event. And it was inspiring to see several world-class athletes in attendance, including Olympic cyclist Curt Harnett, the great Canadian and Ontario cyclist who emceed the event.

After speaking with residents, meeting with organizers and listening to our athletes, it's clear that the level of excitement and enthusiasm for these games is only continuing to grow.

The public's response to these games has been incredible. Within the first 48 hours of going on sale, 75,000 tickets were requested.

So far, we have had more than 33,000 people sign up as volunteers. This is all the evidence we need of a community coming together. These people are virtually getting a free passport to possibly the best seats in the house. They will be our ambassadors to our visitors and the world.

I think it's safe to say that Ontario is ready. We are ready to welcome the Americas to our front door, we are ready to compete and we are ready to win.

Mr. Speaker, as an Ontarian, I am so proud that we will be hosting the largest multi-sport games in our country's history. The size of these games is staggering: more than 7,000 world-class athletes representing 41 countries and territories competing in 51 different sports and hundreds of individual events. The events will be spread throughout 40 different venues across the province, spanning 5,300 square kilometres and 15 host municipalities, including my own. Think about it: The games will showcase Ontario to an international audience, and I know that we will be ready for our moment on the international stage.

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These Pan Am and Parapan Am Games are not only a celebration of human excellence and peaceful international competition; they are also about bringing together athletes, spectators, volunteers, organizers and local communities in the pursuit of excellence, friendship and respect. These games will also provide significant and lasting economic benefits to our province.

The games will attract tourists, create jobs and help to leverage new business investments. They are expected to grow Ontario's GDP by \$3.7 billion, attract up to a quarter of a million visitors, and create 26,000 new jobs. This will be an incredible boost to our economy. There's no question that these games will be an economic driver for our province.

In addition, there will be massive improvements to provincial infrastructure. The construction of new, world-class athletic facilities will ensure that athletes, spectators and Ontarians will reap the long-term benefits that come with hosting such a major international event. These games will transform communities, and that transformation will happen all across the province.

In fact, my riding of Halton is in the midst of such a transformation. Halton has been selected to host the Pan

Am and Parapan Am track cycling events. These events will be taking place in a brand new, state-of-the-art velodrome. Once finished, it will be the only facility of its kind in Canada and just the second in North America. It meets top international standards, giving our Canadian athletes a world-class venue where they can come to train and compete at the highest levels. This will be a great legacy piece, not just for the town of Milton but for Halton, Ontario and Canada as well. Having a world-class venue right in our own backyard in Halton gives our athletes the opportunity to train in Ontario, compete in Ontario and excel in Ontario and the world.

Perhaps the best part about the new velodrome is that it won't be just for top-level athletes. In addition to track cycling, the velodrome will be a central hub of physical activity for our local community, a place that will help to bring people closer together and encourage a more active lifestyle for local residents, regardless of age, fitness or ability. It will be open year-round and will house multipurpose facilities to accommodate a variety of fitness activities, including basketball, volleyball, badminton and running. There will be a new fitness centre and studio space, and there will be areas that can be used to host community events and special gatherings.

It won't just be great for our community fitness and spirit; it will be great for Halton's economy as well. It will help businesses to explore new revenue streams, connect with a larger, more diverse customer base and share in the long-term economic benefits of improved development prospects.

When you think about it, it's really quite remarkable what we'll be getting out of this investment individually, socially and economically. The velodrome is but one example of Ontario's promotion, celebration and legacy strategy, a \$40-million provincial investment, spread over three years, that will be aimed at making sure all Ontarians—not just those living within the games' footprint—will feel a positive impact.

As part of the strategy, the government will be looking to expand our trail network, provide OSAP support for student volunteers, create community-based programs to promote healthy living and leadership, and support the 2015 Pan American Economic Summit to promote trade, investment and business opportunities. It is a plan that aligns with existing provincial programs and it is an excellent way for us to leverage and maximize the benefits from hosting the games.

Getting ready to host the Pan Am and Parapan Games has been a labour of love for all of those involved. It has taken a lot of hard work to get here. Five years of careful planning and preparation have gone into making sure that next summer will be a time that athletes and spectators can enjoy and that the people of Ontario can be proud of. These games are important for our province, for our athletes and for our economy. We will experience the highs and lows of our athletes' performances, but we will know clearly during that brief period in time that we are one Ontario. We are the best province in the best country in the world. This will be our moment. It will be a brief

moment in time, but for many of us, it will result in memories that will last a lifetime and leave a legacy for Ontarians to enjoy for generations to come.

So I call on this Legislature to commemorate this momentous occasion and support this motion to declare July and August of next year to be Pan Am and Parapan Months here in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to speak on this item by the new member from Halton, who speaks so beautifully and reminds me that maybe I need to do more media training. Thank you for that.

I think we all agree that next summer is certainly going to be an interesting summer, and I hope it's going to be a summer that we're going to all be celebrating, and I'd like to lend my support to having July and August 2015 as Pan Am and Parapan Months in Toronto.

When the member from Halton mentioned the velodrome that's being built in her riding, it reminded me of the Montreal Olympics. I am from Montreal, and I have a feeling that Montreal is still paying for the Olympics, believe it or not. To this day, they still haven't finished paying for it. It was also supposed to be infrastructure that the city would be left to enjoy. Well, I think that the city was certainly left with a lot of infrastructure, and I don't know how much enjoyment has been gotten out of it in terms of the costs associated with not just building—we have to maintain this kind of infrastructure, so I think that has to be budgeted in as well, and I hope that is in part of the budget; that the municipalities aren't going to be coming and crying to the province later on and asking for funding to maintain the structures that we're building for these games. We need to ensure that the model is in place.

The Pan Am and Parapan Am Games will collectively give us a chance to proudly celebrate our city and to revel in its diversity. Events such as the Toronto International Film Festival, the Caribbean carnival and World Pride offer us reminders of the city's joys and I think really put Toronto on the map, and I hope the Pan Am Games will as well.

Given the long-term benefits our province will see, I think it's very important that we make sure that these games are a success. The planning for the games—I hate to use the word “scandal,” because it's getting to the point where when we say the word “scandal” so many times, it actually loses its meaning, and I'm concerned with that. There are articles just today in the media saying that politicians are considered one of the least-trusted professions in the world.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not the least, not the least.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Not the least; lobbyist was below us. Way too close.

As an optometrist in my previous life—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock.

I would ask the members on the government side—when their member was speaking, the place was silent,

and I think we should give the same privilege to the person on the other side.

Carry on.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you, Speaker. I'm tougher than I look. I can handle it, but thank you for your help and support.

For Toronto in 2015, we're really hoping that the goodwill and camaraderie will be the same as Vancouver 2012, where representatives from 41 countries from around the world came to our streets, came to our country and really did put us on the map. The athletes' village—I think we all wanted to be there joining in all the fun, and I hope that the roadwork we need to keep these games a success is being looked into.

Right now, Toronto is being choked with gridlock—I don't have to remind everybody of that—and the decision to have the Pan Am Games across 13 municipalities, in my estimation, was somewhat naive, because in order to have it across 13 municipalities, we have to have a way to get all the judges, all the staffing, all the security and all the visitors between these events and municipalities.

1430

We have to be able to feed people, we have to be able to house people, and we have to be able to move people. Toronto can certainly manage. We have enough hotels. I believe we have enough restaurants. But I'm very concerned about the transit, I'm very concerned about the traffic, and I'm also very concerned about the parking issues. I'm hoping that that's going to be addressed, and that we're not going to be coming to the people of Toronto two weeks before the games and saying, “You know what? We're not going to be able to do it without your co-operation. You're all going to have to go on vacation while we're hosting these games or stay home and stay off the streets, because we're not going to be able to have business functioning in Toronto.” We're not going to be able to have the residents of Toronto going about their daily lives with all the extra traffic and transit users. We can have subways, but if the subway cars are full of our Toronto residents, which so often we see that people tell us—I'm sure that other members here hear the same thing from their constituents: The train comes and they cannot get on the train; the streetcar comes and they cannot get on that streetcar.

It will be summer, and I think that unfortunately a lot of Torontonians and people from the greater Toronto area and Hamilton will choose to be away because they will be concerned. I think that if we're having an event like this in our city, I'm really hoping that we have a plan in place to address the traffic chaos that's inevitable. It is inevitable to have some problems. We all know that. We're not expecting it to be perfect.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We're not Manhattan.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Well, Manhattan has a great subway system. Thank you for mentioning that. We see in Manhattan that people are able to get on those trains. They come often, and it's a very well-functioning transit system. The cab fare in Manhattan is also far less

expensive than it is in the Toronto area. Maybe that's something that we have to look at, to say to the cab companies, "You know what? You're going to have so much business, more than usual. Can we have a special Pan Am rate for taxi service?" Maybe that's something that the planners can look at as well.

Of the \$1.4-billion operating budget for these games—that doesn't really include transportation and it certainly doesn't include security costs—almost half is earmarked for capital investment, and a lot of it is in high-performance sport venues. We need to ensure that there is funding for our athletes to train; not just to have these venues, but we need to invest in coaching for all of our athletes. Otherwise, this really won't be a great investment in terms of our sports community.

The area's athletic community has been woefully underserved in a lot of ways. I think we saw a big investment in our athletes before the last two Olympics, but I hope that with the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, we can find the necessary funding, either through different government programs or through private sponsorship of some kind, because it's great to have the venues, but if we don't have the funding to coach our athletes, it really is in vain.

I want to mention that the security costs are ballooning. I've been to some of the committee meetings, and again, part of it is because it's across 13 municipalities. I'm wondering where the funding is going to be coming from, because what we saw in the last couple of weeks in our capital of Ottawa is that security costs are of great concern. I'm concerned that somebody might use the Pan Am Games and the world stage that it's on to make political statements through violence. I would like to see that we're investigating that through social media programs, perhaps asking people to be alert—and what they should be alert for, because it's not something that we can rely on just our police and security forces to do. We have to also do our part.

Let's celebrate. I look forward to celebrating with everybody here and everybody at home. We need to celebrate Pan Am as an opportunity to promote sports and camaraderie within our city, our province and our country. Let's use it as a beacon of light and progress on to our visiting athletes, teams and tourists. Let's remember the Pan Am Games as a fantastic event and not a failed opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to start off by saying that it's a pleasure, as the New Democratic Party's critic for tourism, culture and sport and the Pan/Parapan Am Games, to speak on this motion. When I think of a long celebration of a particular event, in this case two months of this celebration, I think of how much this event must mean to so many people locally.

I'm sure the minister would like to hear this: I have a personal connection to the Pan Am Games. In the first Pan Am Games in Hamilton in the 1930s, my aunt was a world-class swimmer. She then went on to train for the

Berlin Olympics. For 29 years after she completed that, she taught many budding Olympic swimmers in the 200-metre and 100-metre breaststroke for Canada. I also had family members who were involved in other sports during the first Pan Am Games—which I might add was in Hamilton, Ontario—called the British Empire Games.

I'd like to also say that my colleague across the floor, the MPP from Halton, did a wonderful job in her speech on promotion and sales, which is also part of the whole Pan Am procedure. That certainly is something that has to be promoted, and hopefully her venue will be ready soon for use. That's if some of the other venues are finished on time.

Of course, I've stood up here many times and had concerns about the Pan Am stadium in Hamilton. I've been saying for months—these concerns that I've raised with the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games for some months now; he has stood up and kind of done a good sales job. It's his job to do that, and he's certainly avoided my questions about finance and kind of deflected and said that I should be honoured that I have this stadium in Hamilton, and I should be honoured, and we should all be honoured that these venues are coming to the province. No doubt about it: We're excited about the after-use of the venues, if they're used in a proper sense.

However, let's talk about the cost. I don't think this minister was around, as I was, when the Montreal Olympics took place in 1976. Mayor Drapeau and the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Paul Miller: With all due respect, Speaker, we listened to them; they don't want to listen to the truth.

They paid off their debts last year, and I remember the Big O crumbling about 10 years ago, and they had to repair that. Cement actually almost hit some spectators at a game. These are the types of things—the legacy, as the member from Halton likes to talk about: Some of the buildings that they used in 1976 Olympics are now rundown, derelict buildings down by the waterfront in Montreal that are being used for nothing. I remember one of them, in particular, they wanted to turn into a residential area after the athletes finished; it was called Habitat. Habitat is now a rundown, weed-filled building. These are concerns that are serious.

The minister went out of his way yesterday to take my concerns to a personal level, unfortunately, by saying that I did not attend the briefings. I'd like to set the record straight today. My staff, my EA from Queen's Park and our researcher, attended two of those briefings because I was—sorry, Minister—at a funeral, and I was out of town for those two things. Thanks for bringing that up. The first did include the previous minister but was chaired by his deputy; he wasn't at the first one. It was for the media. The EA and researcher both attended and said to me that it was more of a sales pitch, more of a rah-rah than actual numbers and finances about the cost of security. It started off at \$138 million; now we're at

\$238 million, and they still haven't signed the final deals, as the minister said the other day. He said they did, but they haven't signed the deals with the regional police departments, which is going to raise the internal costs and raise the external cost even more.

For them to stand up here week after week and chastise opposition members for their concerns—doing their job: protecting the buck for the taxpayer—is really unfair of them to do because they don't know the final numbers. The minister even told me he doesn't know the final cost of security. That's a fair thing to say, but the bottom line is, don't stand up here day in, day out, week after week, saying everything is hunky-dory, everything is on budget, everything is going to be great, we should be thankful, we're just being negative and all that.

I'll tell you what, Speaker. You heard it here first: I'll be glad when it's all over and all the numbers finally come in. I think the tune might change a little bit over there. I'll be there to watch and I'll be there to evaluate, and I'll certainly pass it on to our fair minister and his friends if he doesn't come in under budget, like he said, and on time.

1440

Moving on: The venue was difficult, to say the least. It took about 30 minutes for my EA, an ISU staff person at Queen's Park—they reported that they got all the details within 30 minutes, and when they got there, it sounded like an old TTC service barn. It was difficult to hear. We didn't pick up half the thing because we were sitting way at the back and they had all their staff at the front. So the people they think are negative were way in a corner; we could hardly hear them.

Just to be clear, to take this even further—and the minister can't deny this—I initiated a meeting with him a couple of weeks ago—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I hope you're going to turn this around to the bill that's in front of us.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's all part of the game, Speaker. Speaker, you can't be biased here—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. Order.

I'm trying to do my job, and you people are trying to be above me by shouting me down. This is the second time. The next time, I'm probably going to throw a few people out.

I would ask the member to tie this into the motion that's in front of the House as quickly as possible. It has now been five minutes.

Mr. Paul Miller: I thought the costs had something to do with it, Speaker, but okay, if you think I'm off-base a little bit—I don't think so.

The Liberal government can hide behind so-called facts and figures that aren't legit. They're not the final product, and that's fine.

Before I get more jabs from them because they don't like what they're hearing—the truth does hurt—listen: I fully support the athletes. I support the tourism industry.

It's almost laughable when they criticize me. I come from a huge, huge sports family. We cover boxing, hockey, baseball, football—huge in the Hamilton area. Why would I not want that? I'm for it, 100%, but my job here is to protect the taxpayers' dollars so that we don't end up in a legacy scenario like the Montreal Olympics. That's what we're here for: to protect the taxpayers. I will continue to do my job.

I cannot help but be a little suspicious about the bookkeeping. I recall, during committee, that when I asked for the total cost of the games, I was given a figure. Upon further probing, I unearthed the truth: that the athletes' village was a separate cost structure and not reported as a cost for the games, which was interesting. So we had two sets of books. The cost of that was extraordinarily high.

I know that the security costs could escalate, but at this stage of the process, with the current world situation and threats—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: We're discussing a private member's bill on the declaration of two months for a special occasion next year. I think the member is completely off track.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I am listening very carefully. I have asked the member to bring it back to the motion that's in front of us. I think he tried a little. I have given every speaker a little bit of leeway to speak about the games.

The member for Hamilton.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thanks, Speaker. I guess security is part of the games. I could be wrong; you might want to correct me on that. An American company won the bid for the security for the Pan Am Games, and apparently that company is now hiring kids out of law and security courses—they want to get about 1,000 across the province, across the country, to act as security. I'm very concerned about that, because these are not front-line security people. They're young people who are in a college course, and they have not dealt with situations that could escalate. I think that's bad.

Guess who's hiring them? The American firm that won the bid that was double the bid of the company in Toronto, Reilly Security, which has been around for years, has trained supervisors and trained personnel, and has handled many big venues. They could have handled it, and they were actually hundreds of thousands of dollars cheaper than the American company. So you've got to ask yourself what's going on there.

These are inexperienced students who could face very difficult and very unhappy crowds—depending on if they can't get in or whatever; emotions will be flying high—and they won't have the experience of what to do and when. They could be at a serious risk of workplace injury, but without being traditional employees in Ontario, how much workplace insurance will they have, and will

they qualify for WSIB if they're injured in a crowd situation?

There are other questions about these games—and such wriggling around quantifiable answers, that it makes many of us wonder what financial shocks we'll be facing in less than a year. To be quite blunt, I wonder what kind of smoke and mirrors today—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member again to tie it to the motion that's in front of us.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I just said, "What smoke and mirrors is this motion?" Is that not talking to the motion? It's really just another opportunity—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: Minister, it's just another sales job, to make the Liberal Party look good; that's all it is.

I was shocked to find out that the GO train passes immediately on the south side of the athletes' village. There's no platform there to move the athletes to various venues. That could cause a problem.

This is a terrific opportunity to get people moving, not only to Union Station but beyond, without getting caught up in the traffic, on streetcars. Is anyone thinking about how to maximize opportunities like this that will continue as a very valuable legacy cost of these games? Shocking to me—actually, yet another shock to me—that would be a legacy of the games worth celebrating—not with a month recognizing the games but with an actual GO station stop that can move people downtown for years to come. Great idea, but no, you haven't done it.

Really, if we get right down to it, July and August 2015 will be more than well recognized without moving a fluffy motion like this. This motion is just a feel-good motion. It's one of those ones like—I don't know—let's make it Nickel Day. It's just another one of these fluffy—we don't need a sales job done here. We need facts and figures.

It's not as wasteful as—you know what, Speaker? I'm going to end it by saying this: All I've asked for, for the last four years, former minister, present minister—I said, "Listen, just tell me the costs. Tell the people of Ontario the costs. Tell us that it really is going to be on budget."

They told me there would be no delays. Let's look at the stadium in Hamilton. It was supposed to open in June. This is now November and it's still not completely done. I predicted, on a tour—not that I'm a specialist; I have three trades, by the way. I took a tour of the stadium and I said they'd be lucky if they got it for Labour Day, and they only had half the stadium done for Labour Day. I said they'd be lucky if they get it for November. Well, it's November, and it's still not done, so that prediction six months ago is coming true.

I'll tell you right now, Speaker, when it's all said and done, it's great. I'm excited for the athletes, I'm excited for the opportunity and I'm excited for the end use. But I want to see the final cost to the people of Ontario. I'm telling you right now: They won't be under budget; they won't be on time. I'm telling you it's a fallacy.

They're trying to spread it out and make it look good with flowers, and everything is wonderful and everyone

else is negative but them, because they know how to do everything right. I don't want to get into that, all the other things they've done, but the bottom line is, we'll see. We'll stand by with bated breath to watch the final result. I wonder if the minister is going to be doing any back-stepping. He might.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to first start by thanking my colleague the MPP from Halton for this great bill that's coming forward into this House—that motion, I should say—which really will help build on the strengths of what the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games have to offer here next year, in July and August.

I want to start off by thanking the Conservative Party of Ontario. I want to thank the Conservative Party of Ontario for having the wisdom, 84 years ago, to bring the Empire Games here to Ontario. That was the last time here in the province of Ontario—

Interjection: What?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Eighty-four years ago—back in 1930, in the beautiful city of Hamilton—the last time we were bold enough to bring forward a multinational, multi-sport games here to the province of Ontario. You would think, Mr. Speaker, that in this House the notion of bringing a multinational, multi-sport games here to Ontario would be accepted by all members of this Legislature. It is quite sad today to hear that there are people who are very critical of these games. I see these games as an opportunity for all Ontarians but mostly for young people here in the province of Ontario.

I think it's an extraordinary opportunity to rebuild infrastructure, like we're doing in Hamilton, to recognize the fact that we need the type of facilities to provide our athletes with the opportunity to compete on a world-class scale. What's happening in Milton is a perfect example of our building the type of infrastructure that's necessary for our young people. We know that prior to building this velodrome, people were actually packing their bags, jumping on a plane, heading over to California and practising there—our team, people in Ontario—and then coming back to Ontario. To me, that's unacceptable. If we can have our athletes stay here in Ontario, and actually attract athletes from across Canada here to Ontario, I think it's a win for the young people of this province.

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In fact, Mr. Speaker—I have about a minute left—I'm going to tell you about a few of the things that we're doing, I believe, in our government to help young people here in this province to become stronger and to help build them into responsible young individuals.

The Pan Am/Parapan Am Kids Program is going to be throughout our schools, and it's going to talk about accessibility and games that will be inclusive to young children. We have volunteer certificates that will be issued through the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration that will provide young people with an opportunity to hand an employer a certificate to say that they've been trained in things like accessibility. There is OSAP

deferral for volunteers, which I think is great, up to a year of deferred OSAP loans—and, of course, the new infrastructure.

My two daughters, Maren and Myla Coteau, actually take advantage of this new infrastructure; I talked about this in committee. They go to the Pan Am building in Scarborough and they take their swimming lessons there. It's a beautiful hub, and my children love it. They're in lane 10, I think, one day—I think it's a Tuesday—and they love it.

I want to say thank you to the people who had the insight—in fact, five years ago today—to win the bid for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. Thank you so much. And I want to congratulate the member for her great work.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to speak on this particular motion, but I'm going to focus in on the athletes, because the full disclosure is that I have three nieces who are competing at the international or national level currently. I understand, because I see it in those three families—

Interjection: What sport?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: —I'm getting to it—how committed these athletes, these young people, are—and, quite frankly, their families and their support systems.

My niece Perianne Jones, a two-time Olympian in Sochi and Vancouver in cross-country skiing, was the youngest member, at 17. Her training all had to happen in Canmore. I'm a parent; my children are 12 and 15. I can only imagine how challenging it would have been for my brother and my sister-in-law to say, "Yes, go after your passion. See you later. Enjoy Canmore." So I have to give her a lot of credit for making that commitment and doing that.

My other niece, Kate Friesen, is currently competing at the national level in hockey. Once again, you travel a lot—family commitments. She will actually be taking her education and continuing her career in the States next year. Again, it's very challenging: a 17-year-old who's going to leave her family and be literally 10-plus hours away.

Finally, to my youngest niece, Sarah Gillies, who is 12 years old. She is going to be competing, or is currently competing—again, at the provincial level—in para-skiing. It's a huge commitment, all through the summer. My own daughter is 12 years old, and she's very close with Sarah.

You see how much energy and how much passion and how much work it is to continue and to stay at that provincial and that national level.

This motion speaks to that passion for the athletes, and I'm happy to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very proud to support my colleague MPP from Halton on this very important resolution. I think it's a great resolution to bring forward.

It helps build the excitement that we're already feeling for the games. It's fantastic.

We've talked about how great these games are for Ontario, how they're great for Canada, they're great for the world. The minister responsible for the Pan Am Games talked about the aquatic facility where his daughter swims; that happens to be in my wonderful riding of Pickering—Scarborough East. It's the largest infrastructure facility for the games, and it's fantastic. I think they're doing fencing there, and some other things. It's quite something to see, if you haven't seen it. It's just a remarkable facility of infrastructure and accessibility and community—

Interjection.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yes, by a remarkable government, exactly.

What's important—and I've talked about this before—is the legacy of some of these facilities; the legacy for the community in Scarborough, where I grew up. I went to high school just down the road from where that facility is now. There wasn't much at West Hill Collegiate, I've got to tell you. The school was great, but the community didn't have a place like it has now.

I know there are so many organizations that are going to be part of that legacy facility, not the least of which is the Canadian men's and women's—men's for sure; I'm not sure about women's—wheelchair basketball teams. I can tell you that right now they have to go to the States to train, and it takes lots of time and expense to do that. They'll be able to do that right here in Canada, and I think that's fantastic.

When I was out there a couple of weeks ago, I met with members of both the women's and men's wheelchair basketball teams, and I actually took some shots at the net from a wheelchair. I know how to get around in a wheelchair pretty good, because I'm married to a paraplegic, as many of you know. But I'm telling you: Shooting baskets from a chair is really, really difficult. Of course, it just increased my respect for these athletes and the work they do. They were there at the crack of dawn—that's when they're there every day—to train and put their best foot forward for us next year at the games.

It's very competitive. Wheelchair basketball is very competitive. My husband used to play it. In fact, my husband is a former Canadian Paralympian. I think he still holds the record in backstroke.

I'll just conclude by saying that I know he did that a long time ago, when he was much younger. But that experience of travelling around the world and representing his country was one that shaped his future tremendously, exposed him to the world and spurred him on to travel internationally and so on. So the experiences of the athletes cannot be measured by the games themselves. They really extend beyond.

I just want to say thank you again to my colleague from Halton: a great, great motion, and I'm very pleased to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: In the limited time we have left, I want to commend the member from Halton on recognizing July 2015 as Pan Am Month and August 2015 as Parapan Month in Ontario.

There's been a lot of talk today about the games. We certainly need to celebrate the athletes. That's what we should all be doing here. There's been some overshadowing on this topic by the government's poor management of the games, whether it's expense scandals, construction delays, golden parachutes or executives who failed to bring budgets in on time. Maybe they should have consulted the former mayor of Winnipeg, who is now the Minister of the Environment. You hosted the games in Winnipeg in, I think, 1999, did you not, for a cost of only \$150 million? Well done. I think that maybe there should be some consultation with the minister who exists now.

But really, we want to see them succeed. They're coming. I know that in Minden Hills, in my area, they're hosting the canoe/kayak slalom event at the Minden Wild Water Preserve. I'll be there to watch them.

I'm running out of time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First, I want to acknowledge my colleague from Halton, who has quickly become one of the bright lights and most thoughtful voices in this assembly. Some of the best time I've ever spent was knocking on doors with my friend.

I also want to thank Ministers Coteau and Chan, former Premier Peterson and many others who played such a seminal role. They took a lot of heat in this House for some very courageous decisions.

Yes, I was on the planning committee for the 1999 games, when I first got elected to city council in the 1980s. I was mayor and played a major role the last time, so I know first-hand how hard it is for a city to secure these games.

One of the things that's really interesting to us is that we had 60 years when Vancouver got the Olympics and Calgary got the Olympics and Montreal got the Olympics and Victoria got the Commonwealth Games and Winnipeg got the Pan Am Games twice, in 1967 and in 1999. When I was mayor, we used to tease Toronto and Hamilton about never having really had a major event in our lifetime. I'm very proud to be part of a government that finally has delivered for Ontario.

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The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock: We had problems. Do you know what is amazing to me about Ontario? I'm starting to understand why previous governments couldn't do it, because they're like the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. They can tell you everything that could possibly go wrong and paralyze themselves. They never did it. It's because, when the parties opposite had their shot, they were terrified. They're the most risk-averse. We're excited, Mr. Speaker. We know this is going to be amazing.

The reason that the Winnipeg games were so inexpensive was because we held them before. We didn't have to

build anything and we didn't have the Parapan Am Games. Everything was built. The athletes' facilities were built; the pools were built; all of that was built. We renewed them all.

The other thing I love: I was mayor of the poorest of the large cities in Canada. We had the highest debt and the highest property taxes when I got elected. When I left, we had the lowest debt and the second-lowest property taxes. So I can tell you first-hand: Pan Am Games are good for building your tax base and helping governments.

There's a reason I ran for the Liberals and not the Conservatives or the NDP: because that philosophy of prudence without being afraid to take a risk is found in this party, not in the parties opposite.

We are delivering a games, but these aren't like the Winnipeg or—these are like the Rio games. Rio then went on to get the Olympics and ran the most successful games. This is Ontario's introduction to the world of international competitive athletics which previous governments had delivered in the last century. Every other major region of Canada entered the international sporting scene in the 20th century. We had to wait until the 21st century. Thank God we finally elected a bright, creative, risk-embracing, innovative Liberal government that, for the first time, is delivering what are going to be the most amazing games.

I'm going to keep all the tapes from all of the whiners and lemon-suckers opposite so that when the games are booming—let's just remember who took the risk and showed the leadership and who hid in the shadows and whined and told us, "It's all going to be so terrible. We should all be so afraid."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm thrilled to be able to speak to this motion. Anybody who knows me will tell you that I will always be willing to speak about the important issues of value for money and value for taxpayers' dollars.

Today, though, in the limited time I have, I'd just like to speak to the motion. The motion is about making sure that we declare next July Pan Am Month and next August Parapan Month. I would like to congratulate my fellow member from Halton. I think it's an excellent motion.

Let me just say this: I was raised believing that we live in a wonderful city in a great province in the best country in the world. I believe that this motion and these games allow us to do three things: They allow us to celebrate that as Ontarians; they allow us to share that with people from around the world that are going to be coming to Ontario; and they allow us to build on that success by building the infrastructure, the legacy, that will allow us to make sure that we can enjoy and savour these games for years to come.

So I hope that we can count on the members opposite to support the motion. I congratulate my fellow member from Halton. Let's pass this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: In the very brief time I have, I congratulate the member from Halton. I'm very excited about the legacy that's going to be left here: the best CFL stadium in the country in Hamilton, terrific aquatic facilities in Scarborough, and the renewal of the Etobicoke Olympium, which was a legacy of the 1976 Paralympics and is a few blocks from my home. We will be celebrating the wonderful athletes. It was wonderful to hear from some of the members in this House who have that link to athletes. That's what these games are about in Ontario. We'll have a wonderful legacy from it if we all work together to celebrate it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Halton, you have two minutes now to reply.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. You know what? Politics is about passion, and I can tell you, I heard a lot of passion in this room today. In my perspective, the way I look at the world is, I see a glass of water half-full, not half-empty. I think, ultimately, in the end, that's what this discussion is about.

This is about really bringing the world to our doorstep, having the games here that celebrate Ontario, and also ensuring that our children, their children and children down the road get a chance to actually be able to do the things that they aspire to, that they see others do.

I couldn't agree more with the member from Dufferin-Caledon and her comments. Kudos to you and your family.

Applause.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Yes.

My children also participated—not on that level, but rep hockey, rep soccer, you know, competitive figure skating, dance. I know many parents spend their time getting up early in the morning, going to other cities, going to other arenas, going to other places in order to make sure our children get the shot they deserve.

In my opinion, first of all, these games are what we should be doing. If other provinces can do it, why not Ontario? I believe we should be doing it.

In terms of my motion, I think this is a way for all of us to embrace all that is good about this province. Is this a feel-good motion? Absolutely. Are the things that happen in government when we stand in here only supposed to be negative and critical? No. I think we need to stand up together and roar and support each other. That should happen in the House, in addition to making sure that we are vigilant when things go awry.

So I am here today saying that declaring those months, proclaiming July Pan Am Month and August Parapan Month, is a perfect opportunity for all of us to come together in this province and make sure we move forward together with these games. Thank you.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that

Ms. Malhi assumes ballot item number 23 and Mr. Colle assumes ballot item number 18.

Orders of the day.

PANCREATIC CANCER

Mr. Joe Dickson: I move that, in the opinion of this House, since pancreatic cancer has the lowest survival rates of any cancer, and awareness is the first step to prevent and end this disease, therefore November 13 should be recognized as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dickson has moved private member's notice of motion number 9. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise today to ask all members of the House to join me and individuals around the world to mark Thursday, November 13, as the first-ever World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

Some in this House might be surprised to learn that pancreatic cancer has one of the lowest survival rates of any cancer, and this has been true for more than 40 years. Mr. Speaker and my fellow members, together we must raise awareness to shine a light on this deadly issue.

I'm proud to join the many organizations around the world who are leading this initiative, including Pancreatic Cancer Action, who are committed to tackling the fight against pancreatic cancer by raising awareness of the deadly disease and, more importantly, raising awareness of the poor overall survival rates of people with pancreatic cancer. Together with Pancreatic Cancer Action, World Pancreatic Cancer Day will help to bring about a new awareness of the disease and a focused need for urgent change.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House would be interested to learn that the launch of World Pancreatic Cancer Day will include a number of different developments, including a dedicated website and a special social media campaign. These multimedia tools will help drive the conversation and increase public awareness around this cancer. I know that Pancreatic Cancer Action has a goal to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer on an international basis. Ontario is proud to be part of this movement.

Many might not know, but in 2009, pancreatic cancer was the 12th most common cancer diagnosed in Ontario, with some 1,502 cases diagnosed, according to Cancer Care Ontario. That same year, it was also the fourth most common cancer cause of death in Ontario, with 1,462 deaths: 715 for males and, unfortunately, 747 for females.

1510

Ontario has made some progress, as the five-year relative survival rate ratio increased from 8.9% for 1995-99 to 11.6% for 2005-09. But as you can see from these alarming stats, we have much more to do.

I also find it surprising that such a deadly disease, which has impacted thousands of Ontarians, is still so

poorly understood. But they can be forgiven for that, because unfortunately, it does not get a lot of attention. That is why I am standing in the Legislature today. As an MPP, one of the biggest pleasures of my job, as yours, is in helping people in our communities, mine of Ajax–Pickering, Durham region—and of course, for all of us, all of Ontario.

I'm proud of the health care investments our government has made, including increased funding to home and community care by 92% since 2003, and \$260 million more for community and mental health care in 2013. Across Ontario, that has meant over 226,000 more people are now receiving home care than in 2003, including 76,000 more seniors over the past two years. That's right: 76,000 more seniors over the past two years.

Together, our government has created 54 health links, covering half of the province, bringing together providers in our most complex patients' circle of care to create individualized care plans, keeping seniors in their homes and keeping seniors out of hospital. And we've gone from worst to first in surgical wait times, with the shortest wait times in Canada for the past eight years, according to the famed Fraser Institute.

My community is now better served because we are building cutting-edge health infrastructure, with over 100 major health capital projects complete or under way, including 23 new hospitals. These investments are vital to help create and sustain a system that can identify and treat deadly cancers like pancreatic cancer.

Our government has also added almost 5,000 new doctors since 2003, meaning that 2.1 million people, 2.1 million more Ontarians—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On a point of order: I'm waiting to hear more about pancreatic cancer and less about hospital building, if we can get back to the point of the topic. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I think he's trying to draw a reference to both, and I'll let him carry on.

The member for Ajax–Pickering.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will certainly attend to that.

Just for the record, again, that was 2.1 million more Ontario residents who now have access to a family doctor. And we have added 20,500 new nursing positions since 2003.

Ontario is also finding new and innovative ways to bring care closer to people, including 25 new nurse practitioner-led clinics, over 100 community health centre sites, and family health teams serving 206 communities, providing care to over three million Ontarians, many of whom, of course, are cared for because of cancer. Our government has a care record that we can be proud of.

Now, I'm here today to build on that strong foundation and increase awareness and literacy on this deadly cancer, a

cancer which, as I mentioned earlier, impacts many around the province. The direct impact of a cancer diagnosis is such a destabilizing event in one's life. I know many of the members of this chamber have been affected by cancer, whether through yourself or friends or constituents.

I'd like to tell you a short story about one of my wife's sisters: Karen White from Maple Grove, which is now Clarington, who had struggled with pancreatic cancer for 28 years. When I was dating my now lovely wife, Donna—that doesn't sound right. I want to clarify that she has always been young and lovely since the day I first met her.

I'm referencing the first time we met her older sister Karen and her husband, Ted, and her two baby children, when we did a babysitting session for some two hours on a Saturday. They later had two more great children, Kevin and Paul. Karen was one of those rarities: a loving wife and dedicated mother of four who excelled in highly competitive sports year-round. The family received the bad news in 1980 that Karen had a growth on her pancreas. It was determined quickly that it was more than just a growth.

A devout Christian, she lived a prayer-filled life, stood on promises, never lost her faith and never lost hope. She never, ever drank, and she never, ever smoked. Through it all, she continued in high-calibre sports enterprises up to the end in 2008, playing for Canada in the Canada-USA international softball championship in Florida. Sadly, she passed away a few months after that.

However, she lived 28 years with pancreatic cancer, making so many untold hospital visits, two exploratory operations, a portion of her bowel removed, double bypasses, heart surgery and a breast removed. Some say Karen was one of the very lucky cases, living 28 years with the deadly disease.

Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for all members here when I say we need to do all that we can to fight to cure cancer. Today with this motion, we're taking a big step together, joined by individuals from around the world, to stand up for World Pancreatic Cancer Day on Thursday, November 13. I would ask that each member of this House take time to reflect on both the impact of the disease and what you can do to increase awareness and join the fight.

They say a journey starts with a single step, so today we are taking that step to increase awareness.

I thank you, Speaker; I thank you, fellow members; and I thank you, Karen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you to the member for his comments and for raising awareness of such a serious and deadly type of cancer. As an optometrist married to a physician—I know maybe it doesn't sound so nice, but my husband used to often get calls from people saying that a relative had a certain diagnosis, and asking what he thought the prognosis was. He used to say, well, if they were told they had pancreatic cancer, then the prognosis

is quite serious; that 99% of the time it's terminal and the other 1% was a misdiagnosis. It's a very serious cancer.

I think it says something about human nature in general that, until we raise awareness of something by having a special month, maybe a hashtag on Twitter or a special day to focus on and raise awareness, oftentimes, unless people have a close friend or family member who is affected, they aren't aware of a certain type of disease.

We saw this just recently with ALS, when they had the bucket challenge. So many people did not know what Lou Gehrig's disease was; they didn't know what ALS stood for. But the bucket challenge on social media really did raise awareness.

So kudos to the member for bringing this forward and trying to raise awareness of such a deadly cancer. It's the fourth-leading cause of cancer death in Canada, according to my notes. Approximately 4,700 Canadians are diagnosed each year with pancreatic cancer, and 4,300 will die each year. That's a testament to what a deadly type of cancer it is.

One of the reasons pancreatic cancer has such a poor prognosis is that it's very difficult to have early detection. They are making advances in terms of early detection. That's why I think it is a good idea to raise awareness now.

1520

It really is one of those sort of symptomless diseases that masks as something else entirely, and by the time they figure out what it is—it's often by process of elimination. They're able to prove that it isn't one medical condition, it isn't a second medical condition, and it isn't a third. Then finally—finally—they decide that they have to go in and take a look at the pancreas. Because it's such an internal organ, it's not something that's easy to look at.

Most people, as I said and the member said so well, aren't aware of what pancreatic cancer is until they know somebody with the disease. I think that that's something that we all have to work on, to raise awareness so that we can have people advocate, even on their own behalf, and suggest that they might suspect that it's something more serious than what their doctor is suggesting and they want further testing. I'm hoping that, with awareness of pancreatic cancer, people will understand some of the signs and symptoms.

All of the great medical care that we have in the province of Ontario—you can build hospitals, but if we don't have them staffed and we don't have the proper equipment, that's not providing health care. If we're closing departments, as was discussed earlier today, in Leamington, that the obstetrics gynecology department was closing—well, it's not just about having babies, obstetrics and gynecology; it's women's health. If women have children to take care of, and they're told that they need to go for a follow-up appointment, and it's hours of a drive away, they're far less likely to go.

We can't just look at the costs. We have to look at the lives that are at stake and have health care access close to home. It's a balancing act, and we all know that. We all

know that we would like to have a hospital in every neighbourhood with every department and every type of machine. We know that there are limitations to the closeness that we can provide for health care, but we do have to make it accessible in the province, and we do have to provide the services. There are many challenges—we all know that—in terms of different cultures and different languages and in terms of budgetary constraints.

But we have to realize that the funds that we're collecting, as nice as it was—we just spoke about the Parapan Am games. We like to apply the tax revenue to these fun events, but we have to first find ways to fund the health care of our aging population and our youth as well. We have to find the wherewithal within all of us to focus the health care dollars where they're supposed to go, into front-line health care; not creating bureaucracies, not creating other layers of government, which is what the LHINs and the CCACs are. These are all administrative levels, and they eat up a lot of the funding for health care. We need to focus that funding on health care as much as we can.

I'm glad that we're talking about pancreatic cancer and raising awareness of pancreatic cancer, but I think that we also have to always remember that there are many other diseases that we need to raise awareness of as well. We see in the Legislature that very often stakeholders come and visit us. They'll do things like giving us pins to recognize what they're trying to raise awareness of. We had just yesterday ME, myalgic encephalomyelitis; they came to visit to raise awareness of people with very debilitating problems. They understand that without awareness, the budget is not focused on where they need it to be focused.

I'm happy to support a wonderful program of raising awareness of pancreatic cancer. I think that everybody here will unanimously support it as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Kenora—Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm glad to be weighing in on this important issue of pancreatic cancer awareness. Cancers of all forms are frightening and becoming increasingly common among the general population. I'm sure that each of us in this chamber has been touched personally in some way by this disease, whether it's a personal struggle or that of a loved one, a friend or a co-worker. Many times the forms of cancers that have touched our lives are generally known. That is to say, they are types that we have heard about before and have been involved with in some way, perhaps through fundraising.

What is alarming about pancreatic cancer is the relative mystery about the disease. Despite being the fourth-leading cause of cancer-related death in Canada and the United States and having the highest mortality rate of all major cancers, awareness of pancreatic cancer is exceptionally low compared to other forms of cancer.

In November 2012, Pancreatic Cancer Canada commissioned an Ipsos Reid poll that surveyed over 1,000

Canadians to determine their knowledge and awareness of the disease. The poll found that only one third of Canadians are knowledgeable about pancreatic cancer, and that we tend to vastly overestimate its survival rate.

Other facts that are important to note: There are no detection tools to diagnose this disease in its early stages, when surgical removal of the tumour is still possible. Because there are often no early symptoms, it is also very difficult to detect the cancer early. Pancreatic cancer can often grow for months before discovery and diagnosis, and diagnosis is often only made once symptoms become apparent, such as weight loss, back pain and jaundice.

The cancer also spreads rapidly and, unfortunately for most cases—in fact, over 50% of the time—pancreatic cancer tumours are only found after they have metastasized to other organs, giving an average survival rate after diagnosis of only three to six months and earning this form of cancer the title of “silent killer.” Pancreatic cancer is the only one of the top 10 cancer killers that has a five-year survival rate still in the single digits; that is, 6%.

The results of these findings are significant. As Canadians, we aren’t knowledgeable about the disease, and we do not know how silent and deadly it can be. It kills nearly as many people per year as breast cancer. What’s worse is the fact that, without increased knowledge and public attention given to this disease, we have little hope to increase funding for medical research. That, really, is why raising awareness of this silent killer is so important.

An unfortunate thing for all of us with this disease is that it takes away people who bring us so much joy. It was a few years ago when the town of Dryden said goodbye to a beloved jazzman, Craig Fotheringham. His whole life was filled with music, and he brought that pleasure to everyone around him. As a youth, Craig played piano under the instruction of his mother and piano teacher. As a teenager, he enjoyed success in the local group Shades of Blue during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Over the years of his musical career, he became a celebrated musician. His loss has left an undeniable void in the country, blues, rock and jazz scenes. This formidable musician passed away at the age of 58, following a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic Cancer Canada has done a good job in terms of raising awareness throughout the year by remembering those who have lost their lives to the disease, supporting those who have been diagnosed and are battling the disease, and providing hope for future generations that a cure may be found, by featuring two campaigns. In the spring, the organization sells pansies, which symbolize hope for all those who are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In November, the organization features its Purple Lights Campaign, which seeks to shine some light on this terrible disease. This campaign has two particular components: Individuals can participate by displaying strings of purple lights on their homes, and businesses and governments can participate by illuminating their buildings using large purple spotlights during the month of November. Some of the buildings that have

participated in Ontario include the CN Tower—Niagara Falls, Toronto’s city hall and the Niagara Falls Skylon, among others.

But as with all cancers, more needs to be done. As mentioned, public awareness is still very low. It is believed that one of the main reasons for this general lack of public awareness about pancreatic cancer has to do with the fact that there seems to be a relatively small proportion of the Canadian population who personally know somebody who has been diagnosed with this disease.

Only about 6% of the Canadian population personally knows someone, such as a family member, neighbour, co-worker or friend, who has survived pancreatic cancer. This figure serves in stark contrast to the personal knowledge of survivors of other forms of cancer, such as breast cancer—60% of Canadians know someone who has been personally affected—and prostate cancer, where 43% of Canadians know somebody personally affected by the disease, to name a couple of forms.

1530

This fact likely speaks to the high mortality rate of pancreatic cancer. In fact, it may surprise some people in this House that the following celebrities have passed away due to this tragic disease: Steve Jobs, who was a businessperson, entrepreneur and inventor; Bill Hicks, who was a social critic, comedian and musician; Patrick Swayze, singer-songwriter, actor and dancer; Jack Benny, comedian and actor; Luciano Pavarotti, opera singer and actor; Joan Crawford, pin-up girl, actor and singer; Sally Ride, a physicist and astronaut; Donna Reed, an actor; Marcello Mastro—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Mastroianni.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: —Mastroianni—thank you very much—film producer and actor; Anne Francis, model and actor; and Count Basie, a jazz pianist, songwriter and musician.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Basie.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Basie—thank you. I knew I was going to slip up. I can tell my generation is probably coming through a little bit, but I did do my research.

The reason why I’m mentioning these folks, these well-known figures, is to help put a face to pancreatic cancer. Like I said, one of the main reasons why it’s generally thought that there isn’t enough awareness of pancreatic cancer is because the survival rate is so low. By mentioning some of these folks, hopefully, people will have a bit more awareness.

More also needs to be done to combat and prevent this disease, due to the fact that the diagnosis can be slow or late, due to the lack of symptoms, and there aren’t any tools to help with diagnosis. Little is known about the risk factors for developing pancreatic cancer. The few that are defined and thought to be contributing factors include a family history of the disease, and smoking, age and diabetes.

It’s important to note that medical researchers here in Ontario and elsewhere are continuing to work hard to improve detection, increase survival rates and find new

and more effective treatments. Since 2003, Mount Sinai Hospital's Zane Cohen Centre for Digestive Diseases has aimed to identify the genetic, environmental and lifestyle causes of the most common type of pancreatic cancer. To date, more than 1,400 Ontarians have participated in the pancreas cancer study.

On November 13 of this year, we will mark the launch of the first-ever World Pancreatic Cancer Day. This day will serve as an important opportunity to recognize the pain that has been caused by this disease, recognize the work of researchers and promote early detection and awareness. It will also mark the international co-operation of non-profits intent on raising global awareness of pancreatic cancer.

This motion brought forward by the member for Ajax-Pickering reads:

"That, in the opinion of this House, since pancreatic cancer has the lowest survival rates of any cancer, and awareness is the first step to prevent and end this disease, therefore November 13 should be recognized as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in Ontario."

It's an important step for Ontario to participate in this international day of recognition and awareness. I will be joining my Ontario New Democratic caucus colleagues in supporting this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: At the outset, I of course commend my colleague from Ajax-Pickering for not only this particular motion highlighting a very difficult, challenging, often lethal, often terminal, often deadly cancer, pancreatic cancer, but also, perhaps, allowing us in this House to talk about cancer in general.

I think the world itself was moved when the most famous victim of pancreatic cancer succumbed to his illness. I think that was a loss felt across the world. That was, of course, Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Computer. He had a pretty good health care system and a number of specialists and a whole team of folks, but even they, at the highest level—and by the way, this was California, the land of golden dreams. Even the highest level of medical care, unfortunately, was not able to save an individual who was really at the heart of medical practice and innovation and technology. This speaks, first of all, to the challenge with regard to pancreatic cancer.

Speaker, with your permission, perhaps I can use this moment to just talk as a doctor.

Unfortunately, we do tend to see it late. Patients tend to experience what we call the B symptoms, which, unfortunately, are kind of general and could have resulted from many things.

The first, of course, is weight loss. People look cachectic, as we call it, meaning they look somewhat sick, malnourished, maybe a little bit off-colour. They may have fatigue; they may have fevers; they may have unexplained aches and pains.

It's only after many, many, many things are tested for, thought about, eliminated—you know, is it a flu, is it a virus, is it this, is it that, is it a medication change, is it a stressful job, whatever—it is only then that sometimes

folks may trigger or may realize that there's a deeper process going on. By the time the patient experiences these symptoms, say, for months or perhaps even longer, and by the time it declares itself more overtly with things like unremitting, severe, almost untreatable back pain or jaundice—meaning, turning yellow, because it affects the liver and there's leakage of liver fluids—that, unfortunately, is often very, very late.

I would just encourage folks to learn about some of what we call the B symptoms. If things are lingering, if it's not just off-colour on the weekend but progressing, lingering, unexplained weight loss, they should probably be analyzed.

The other thing I would say, is just a shout-out to some of my Etobicoke colleagues, including the honourable Mayor Rob Ford who, as you know, is battling a different form of cancer, not pancreatic but what's called liposarcoma; it's basically fat cells gone crazy. This, by the way, is a cousin of the type of cancer that took out Terry Fox, who had a bone-related cancer, osteosarcoma.

All of this means simply to say that, unfortunately, cancer, as a disease entity, is still alive, it's still progressing, it's still spreading, it's still increasing in prevalence; and all of us should collectively, for the health of Ontarians, and particularly the fortification of our health care system, mobilize all our different modalities, whether it's awareness or supporting my honourable colleague from Ajax-Pickering on this particular day calling attention to World Pancreatic Cancer Day—and also for the members of the public to be aware of the different forms of cancer long, long before they actually declare themselves as, for example, being either inoperable or too large, or having spread, metastasized or left home.

I salute my colleague from Ajax-Pickering. I know that we'll be hearing from some of my other colleagues, including the honourable Monte Kwinter, who will speak more directly to this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Kitchener-Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to a motion that will declare November 13 World Pancreatic Cancer Day; to speak to this motion that really will address the vital need for awareness surrounding the impacts of pancreatic cancer.

In this chamber we see many proposals brought forth for designated days, weeks or months to recognize any number of causes or issues, some more worthy than others, of course, but there is no doubt that this initiative to recognize November 13 as World Pancreatic Cancer Day is something that we can all get behind. In doing so, we will join organizations and individuals around the world to mark the first-ever World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

Why the need for the day and the need for awareness, Speaker? The fact is that, as we've heard, pancreatic cancer has one of the lowest survival rates of any cancer. This has been the case for more than 40 years, and yet very few are aware of its impact. It's a fact, of course, not lost on me, as my extended family is one that has felt that

impact directly. Somebody close to me, my grandfather Lloyd Harris, passed away in 1991 of pancreatic cancer.

I'm often asked about how I got into politics, if my family was involved, and I always say my immediate family wasn't but the one individual who had the political bug was, in fact, my grandfather. I remember, as a little kid, joining him as he was active in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He was a township councillor for Egremont township. I really remember those days fondly. But I do, unfortunately, remember those days when he was dealing with pancreatic cancer and the treatment of that. It was truly a painful sight to see him go through.

Of course, technology and medical advances today are progressing, but as we heard earlier, Steve Jobs, someone who perhaps would have had all the resources at his disposal, unfortunately succumbed to the same thing that my grandfather did. I want to mention that because I do believe it's important, and there is a family connection to that.

World Pancreatic Cancer Day, of course, will help to bring about the much-needed change in awareness levels about the disease and a focus on the need for urgent change. I'm proud to support today's motion to ensure that we in Ontario are part of that much-needed change. With our support, we can move forward to not only raise awareness of pancreatic cancer but also to support innovative research into early detection methods and improved treatment options, and to save lives.

1540

Ultimately, the hope is that the discovery of a screening test will enable doctors to diagnose this disease in its early stage when it is most treatable, resulting in a significant increase in survival rates. As we work toward that goal, I note, as well, that the launch of World Pancreatic Cancer Day this year will also incorporate the launch of a website and a social media campaign. I encourage fellow members to get tweeting on the 13th.

In fact, you can actually get involved today by joining the World Pancreatic Cancer Day Thunderclap, blasting out a message across social media about the signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer.

Again, I thank the member for bringing this forward and pledge my support for the motion to recognize November 13 as World Pancreatic Cancer Day here in Ontario. Thank you, Speaker, for that opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm grateful to contribute to the debate about this motion to announce World Pancreatic Cancer Day. Every one of us has had—someone has touched our lives with the disease of cancer.

Very little is known about pancreatic cancer; it's not something that I hear a lot about. So I did a little bit of reading up on it. They call it the silent disease. Often in its early stages, you don't have the symptoms to know that there's something you need to investigate further. So, definitely, having an awareness piece, making sure that people realize that pancreatic cancer is something

that you can be exposed to and you should be dealing with the screening—I think prevention in medicine, in our health care system, is one of the best ways that we can get ahead of disease and make sure that we stay healthy. If we don't have that prevention piece, then unfortunately the outcomes of these diseases are not very successful.

Some of the symptoms that people will experience are jaundice—we should be letting people know some of the things to watch for; jaundice is one. Also, abdominal pain and back pain; people might think that they've pulled a muscle. Be careful; that could mean something different than what you're experiencing. Onset of diabetes—that's also something that's very important.

We have to take responsibility for our own bodies and know when changes happen so that we can—we don't want to self-diagnose, because that's not a good thing. But once we see that there's something wrong, that we're not feeling the same way, we're tired, we're depressed—because those are other symptoms that happen, and weakness—those kinds of things are flags. As we talk about pancreatic cancer and we bring it to people's attention—those are great ways of making sure that people go out and get diagnosed or get tested or go to their doctor to make sure that they prevent any further seriousness of this type of cancer disease.

I commend the member for bringing it forward and, again, making it something that people should be cognizant of. Our health is very important to every one of us. When we experience symptoms, we should go to a doctor to make sure that we can catch them early and have good survival rates with any kind of cancer.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm delighted to stand and support the motion of my colleague, and I'm talking first-hand.

My older brother, who lived in Florida, woke up one morning—he had never been sick a day in his life, really, and he was in his 60s—and while he was shaving he noticed that his eyes were getting yellow. He was really concerned about it, so he went to see his doctor.

The doctor looked at him and said, "I have to do some tests." Then he said, "You've got pancreatic cancer."

My brother said to him, "What does that mean?"

He said, "Well, the mortality rate is about 99%. The only people who really survive it are people who are diagnosed by accident. Ronnie Hawkins is one of them. He was diagnosed by accident and he's still around."

Anyway, my brother—they started to give him treatment, and then they determined that he might be a candidate for what is known as a Whipple operation. It's a technique that is done very rarely in Canada because people just don't have the expertise to do it, but down in Florida, in Miami, there's a major hospital that does it quite regularly. They had to determine whether or not he was a candidate, and they decided, "Yes, you are a candidate, and we're going to prescribe it."

So I flew down to Florida. I went to the hospital to visit him. He seemed to be quite comfortable. The sur-

geon came in and talked to him and said, “Well, you are a candidate, and we’ve had some positive results from this. We’re going to go ahead.”

The next thing that I knew, they took him into the operating room. I was waiting in there, expecting that I was going to be there for some time. About 20 minutes later, I saw the surgeon come back in, and he wasn’t wearing his scrubs; he was wearing a suit. I said, “What happened?”

He said, “Well, we opened him up, and then we closed him. It was too far gone. There was nothing that we could do about it.”

There was a situation that was totally, totally unexpected. As I say, he was always an outdoorsman, always healthy. Unfortunately, this has happened. I think it’s absolutely critical—because it is probably the most virulent cancer there is, and unless you’re diagnosed by accident, the chances of survival are very remote. I had an opportunity to deal with it first-hand, and I can tell you, it was a shattering experience for all of us, because it was so unexpected.

This is something that I think is important. I don’t know exactly how we get around the fact that there’s no way of knowing this is going to happen to you until it happens to you, and then usually, by that point, it’s too late. From that point of view, I think it’s important that we raise the awareness of it, that we have this day to bring attention to it, to do what was done here today, to talk about the people like the president of Apple, who are prominent people who you would think would have the best medical care available and it doesn’t really matter. If you’re going to get it, as I say, unless you’re diagnosed early by accident, the chances of survival are very, very rare.

I just wanted to share that because, as I say, I had the opportunity to live with it. It was quite an experience and something that I don’t wish anyone else to go through.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It does also give me great pleasure to rise and speak to this bill to declare November 13 World Pancreatic Cancer Day. I thank the member from Pickering, and my heart goes out to his family and his sister-in-law, and also to the member from York Centre and others who have had close encounters and have seen the devastating impact of this disease.

It’s so true that in Canada, something in the order of 4,700 Canadians will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2014, and almost 4,400 will probably die from it. We’ve had a great lesson in the medical side of why this is and some other information from the other side of the House. It is so hard to diagnose in the early stages, so by the time it presents, it seems to be fatal.

Having the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network come forward with this notion to create a day of recognition and acknowledgment is so important. We think about the other diseases that have gone down this route: We have the Becel Ride for Heart to draw attention to heart disease in the province and across Canada and across the

world. We have the Run for the Cure and breast cancer awareness. This has been so incredibly important for helping people identify with the disease so that people will both recognize symptoms and get the treatment but, more importantly, will help raise dollars and awareness corporately and socially—social media campaigns—in order to raise the funds necessary to do the critical research.

1550

To my understanding, there are no early tests to determine—it goes from symptoms. You then start to do your MRI analysis. To be able to find, early on, symptoms of presentation of the disease would be critically important.

The MaRS institute, we know, has a number of companies and high-tech research looking for cures, looking for early diagnostic opportunities and a whole array of medical conditions, of which pancreatic cancer is one, through a company that I’ve had some awareness with, which is seeking a marker drug called an alpha-fetoprotein, which reveals itself in a cancer patient. They can then put targeted chemo to a cancer cell. They’ve shown tremendous success, potentially, with a drug called Taxol, a chemotherapy drug which is widely used in the advanced stages and has opportunities to cure.

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, an American organization which has put together this notion of November 13 to be an awareness day, is also waging a campaign they call “Wage Hope.” This is not about one day a year when we think about the disease. This is about awareness that we can go on and think day to day. I want you to reflect on the campaign of Wage Hope and what that means. When you think about the word “wage,” you’re waging a war. You’re out there. You’re fighting hard for a glimmer of hope—because that really reflects the nature of this disease, where one in seven or 14% of Canadians are expected to get this disease in their lifetime and 1.2% of Canadians are expected to die from it.

When you think of how important it is that we encourage the research, we encourage the investments, we encourage people—part of the awareness issue may well be that people die so quickly. You do not have a lot of survivors who are out there to help direct public attention to this disease. It’s just the nature of how aggressive and how quickly the disease takes people.

I get the sense—and I appreciate the support we’re hearing from all sides of the House—that we can do this and declare November 13 World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? There being none, I now recognize the member for Ajax–Pickering, if he would take his own seat.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge and personally thank each and every one of the members from all parties who spoke today, and that includes the members from York Centre, Etobicoke North, Beaches–East York, Kitchener–Conestoga, Thornhill, Kenora–Rainy River and London–Fanshawe. I hope I haven’t missed anyone, and if I have, I would certainly apologize. I just want to say thank you

very much for speaking in reference to World Pancreatic Cancer Day on Thursday, November 13.

As I said before: They say a journey starts with a single step, so today we are taking that step to increase awareness.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker; I thank all fellow members; and I thank Karen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

BOB MACKIE ACT, 2014

LOI BOB MACKIE DE 2014

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 10, standing in the name of Mr. MacLaren.

Mr. MacLaren has moved second reading of Bill 32, An Act to repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and to make a related amendment to the Ministry of Natural Resources Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a bunch of noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will take the vote at the end of regular business.

PAN AM AND PARAPAN AM GAMES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Naidoo-Harris has moved private members' notice of motion number 7. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PANCREATIC CANCER

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dickson has moved private member's notice of motion number 9. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

BOB MACKIE ACT, 2014

LOI BOB MACKIE DE 2014

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1555 to 1600.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. MacLaren has moved second reading of Bill 32, An Act to repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and to make a related amendment to the Ministry of Natural Resources Act.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

MacLaren, Jack

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Campbell, Sarah
Coteau, Michael
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Duguid, Brad

Gates, Wayne
Hatfield, Percy
Hoskins, Eric
Hudak, Tim
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kwinter, Monte
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
McMahon, Eleanor
Milczyn, Peter Z.

Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Walker, Bill
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 1; the nays are 40.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to revert to motions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The minister says we have an agreement to revert to motions. Agreed? Agreed.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion, without notice, regarding private members' public business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item numbers 13, 15 and 16 be waived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): When this item was last debated, we had finished the leadoff for the government caucus.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm very pleased to stand today, as associate PC health critic, to speak to Bill 21, an act to ensure that blood is donated freely in Ontario. This bill is also known as the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act.

Generally, the Ontario PC caucus, my colleagues, are supportive of the proposed legislation. However, considering the facts, we believe we need to have extensive discussion with all stakeholders to better understand the complexities of the issues involving this bill and make amendments as appropriate to strengthen the bill. I'll speak about that a little bit more at length.

The facts are: 70% of plasma use in Ontario comes from the United States' plasma clinics where donors are paid for plasma. Our system relies on a voluntary system of unpaid donors, not paid donors. The safety and sufficiency of our blood system has been tested before, namely the critically low supplies in 2008 and the tainted-blood scandal that saw 30,000 people receive blood that was infected with HIV and hepatitis C in 1980.

The Minister of Health has known for some time that Canadian Plasma Resources applied to Health Canada back in November 2012 for a licence to collect plasma from paid donors, but did nothing about it until it made the news. The ministry decided to act in haste when it introduced the original bill, Bill 178. Our worry remains that the urgency of the situation may lead to unintentional consequences.

As with many of the bills in this House, we believe we need to take a methodic thought process. We need to ensure that we consult with stakeholders. Sadly, in the last couple of weeks, we've had a number of bills come to this House that are time-stamped by the government, trying to push those through. We believe this is one of those where it can't happen. We definitely need to consult. We're talking about blood services that will impact people at the end of the day, and we want to ensure that there is full debate and full disclosure from all interested stakeholders.

For these reasons, we must ensure that trust and faith in our blood supply system is maintained. That is why we will be calling on the government to provide significant time for committee hearings on this bill: because of the importance and because of the complexity. It is an extremely complex issue, and I'll try to provide more

details of my rationale as I speak for the next 50 to 55 minutes.

We're finding more and more uses for plasma in various medical treatments, so there is going to be an increased demand for plasma. That's the reality, Mr. Speaker; we know that's coming. As I speak a little further, we're going to show that there are times when we may be in a deficiency. We want to make sure that the supply will continue, even if we don't pay for donations. We need to ensure that there is enough plasma and blood in the times when we need them.

Again, that's why it becomes complex. Some people will believe that we should never pay for these types of things, that it may have a negative impact. Others are going to say, "You know what? We're already getting it from the States when we need it in a slow-demand period, and thus we need to do that."

We want to ensure that there are no unintended negative consequences—particularly when it's impacting the health of those that we're truly here to serve—arising from the proposed legislation—

Interruption.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Lily-Anne. It's been a pleasure to have you and your colleagues here. We're saddened to see that you're leaving today, but you are our future and it has been a privilege to serve with you. Thank you very much.

As I often say in this House, the whole reason for me being here is for that generation, the next generation. I have two sons—Zachary is 20 and Ben is 17—and a number of nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews, and of course friends and their children, and that's really why we're here. It's what compels me to come in every day and try to do my best as a member of the official opposition, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, to ensure that we have the best legislation we possibly can.

This certainly is one of those situations, and we want to ensure that every item we debate has thorough debate and the proper stakeholders consulted, and that we're not rushing things through for partisan reasons or just for the sake of expediency. We need to do that.

I'll get back to my notes in hand, Mr. Speaker.

There are significant considerations respecting paid plasma donation that need to be raised, and I'll be doing them on behalf of my colleague, our PC health critic and member for Whitby, Christine Elliott.

In plasma donations, as I understand it, the liquid portion of the blood, which is plasma, is collected, and the remaining blood components are returned to the donor. Plasma is a yellow, straw-coloured liquid that is maybe 90% water. It provides a transportation system for blood cells. Plasma also helps blood to clot, and the plasma collected is usually given to people with liver conditions, burns or bacterial infections in their blood. Evidently, it is vital to our survival—again, the whole need to slow things down to ensure that we're doing the proper consultation with the proper people at the table before any decisions are made.

Plasma can also be used to manufacture plasma protein products. One of the new studies we're hearing

about is the use of plasma proteins in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. As Alzheimer's disease or related dementias impact as many as 500,000 Canadians today, mostly senior citizens, and we all know that that is probably going to increase as we move through the baby boom generation, it's even more critical that we pay attention to this and anything that can help if there's a potential cure for those deadly and horrible diseases.

I think it's safe to say that demand for such novel treatments, and thus the need for plasma products, will increase in the coming years. Therein lies the predicament: How do we best ensure that we're collecting enough plasma to be self-sufficient, which would theoretically amount to 600,000 to 700,000 litres of plasma per year?

According to Canadian Blood Services, we currently purchase the majority of our products from the United States and Europe. As I mentioned earlier in my leadoff, the plasma sources we purchase are 70% from the United States' plasma clinics where donors are paid for plasma. The remainder of our supply, the smaller portion, comes via volunteer donors in Canada.

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I'm proud to say that I've been a blood donor since, I think, I was about 16 or 18 years old. I try to do it wherever I can. I thank the Canadian Blood Services. As their slogan says, it's in all of us to give, so those of you out there listening, those of you in the House, those of you who may look at this recording at some point, I encourage you, wherever you can, when it's safe and practical to do so, to please give. It may be you or a loved one that you are helping somewhere down the road. I applaud all of those in the Canadian Blood Services, the volunteers. Certainly, in our riding we have a number of those, particularly in Owen Sound—the Owen Sound Legion and a fellow by the name of Percy Staight. I think he was about a 20- or 25-year volunteer who organized those clinics with the help of a mass of volunteers. I just want to do a shout-out to all of those people across our great province and across our great country who give their time and energy to collect volunteer blood units on behalf of those who may need them due to other circumstances.

Interestingly, I've also learned that while bodies such as the International Society of Blood Transfusion, the World Health Organization—WHO—and the European Union all strongly stand against paid donation systems, the majority of the world's supply of plasma products comes from paid donors sourced by the plasma industry. At the end of the day, ensuring a safe blood supply is a challenge for our system. We know blood is scarce. Even though, as I said earlier, it is in all of us to give, there are certain times that people wish not to; there are health implications for some who won't do that. But I truly, truly do try to encourage those who are able to do that. I know there is one gentleman in my riding—Jim Moyer is his name—who surpassed 400 units of donated blood, which is a pretty staggering amount that he has given back to his community. That was about a year ago. I think I rose in the House and did a statement to acknow-

ledge that at that time. I believe Jim is still a proud donor and goes at every opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the average adult carries about five litres of blood. The average unit of donated blood is a half a litre. I'd like to remind the House that back in 2008, the Canadian Blood Services—CBS—issued an urgent appeal for donors, warning that the blood supply had fallen to just a two-day supply. That's staggering, when you really think about it, when there are so many people who I believe could and should be giving. So I again encourage, and you'll hear me belatedly through this—and I won't apologize because I do think it is something we all have to do when we have the ability, is to step up and help our fellow person in their time of need.

The Canadian Blood Services national office issued a statement warning that donations dropped 40% over the previous two months. So I ask, what if the demand for blood surpasses our ability to collect it? What really happens then? What are the alternatives? What are the predicaments that we may face? I understand that many people will have a very strong principle one way or another with regard to paid donations, but I think what we have to do is look beyond that and ask, what's for the betterment of everyone? What's the ability for each of us to really look at the collective need and the collective ability to have a solution to help those in need? Can we guarantee that our existing volunteer model can meet that demand of 600,000 to 700,000 litres of plasma per year?

Let's not forget that I shared a little while ago that that's currently with about 500,000 people, sadly, suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia in our population. I just met with the executive director of our local Alzheimer Society, Deborah Barker, and we explored and had quite a good discussion in regard to the concerns we share about that baby boom coming through and how many more people in the next 10, 15, 20 years are going to be afflicted by Alzheimer's and dementia. It's one that I think, again, may be one of those things we need to be 10 years ahead of the curve on. We need to be thinking today of what the solutions are and how we're going to address it, have protocols in place, as opposed to waiting for all of a sudden there is a shortage like we experienced a few years ago and then go into panic mode, because some of those agencies that might be able to provide us need to be aware of what the need may be. We need to have that procurement process and strategy in place long before.

In reviewing the history of blood collection services here in Ontario and Canada, we're quickly reminded again of just how complex the blood supply system is. We're also quickly reminded that the system has been fraught with trial and error in the past. For all of us who lived through the 1980s, we're quickly reminded of the devastation when 30,000 people unknowingly received blood that was infected with HIV and hepatitis C in 1980. It was devastating; thousands of people had their lives cut short because our blood supply system was not safe.

I'd like to remind the House of some key findings from Justice Krever's landmark report on how Canada's

blood system managed the threat of HIV and Hepatitis C transmission from blood transfusions. I think it's important to talk about this landmark report, as it gave us 50 recommendations on strengthening our blood system, which is the crux of this bill. It was, after all, the Krever commission that first recommended against paying donors for their blood. Again, I'm going to cite some information from the Krever report: "As many as 2,000 Canadians became infected with HIV through transfusion or the use of blood products between 1978 and 1985 and 30,000 Canadians contracted HCV through the blood system between 1986 and 1990. Krever's review of the blood system found fault at all levels, from the Canadian Red Cross Society, to Health Canada, to the provincial and territorial governments, to hospitals, as well as to doctors and their governing bodies. Contamination of the blood supply with HIV and HCV, Krever noted, was essentially inevitable, but failures at all levels made the problem larger than it needed to be. A selection of the findings for each of these players includes:

"The Canadian Red Cross Society: inadequate screening of at-risk groups and communities; failure to implement surrogate testing ... for HCV in 1986; failure to abandon a factor VIII product that was suspected of being inadequately treated to kill the HIV...; unacceptable look-back and trace-back processes in place for notification of donors and recipients of contaminated blood."

On the Health Canada side of things: "Lax monitoring by the Bureau of Biologics (the regulator), which should have recognized the threat; no national blood policy that clearly defined roles and authority; reluctance to trace recipients of blood and blood products; passive rather than active regulation of blood and blood products."

Again, what we're seeing—they may have been unintended, certainly, some of these consequences, and probably were, I would suggest, although I wasn't directly involved. But when we see that there are concerns, what we need to do when we're looking at legislation is to put it in place to try to prevent these, wherever possible.

"Provincial governments: a pact to deny compensation to infected claimants; poor surveillance of infectious diseases; failure to properly fund adequate blood screening; failure to build a network of blood manufacturing plants across Canada, which resulted in the necessity to import the product from the United States, where donors were paid and blood was collected from prisoners (practices that increase the risk of contamination)."

Again, you can see what I'm trying to outline is that there is a lot of complexity. People will have various thoughts on either side of many of these contentious issues, whether it be from a principled point of view or just their own personal viewpoints.

"Physicians/Hospitals: some reluctance by physicians to tell patients of their HIV status due to stigma; reluctance to trace recipients of contaminated blood and blood products; homophobia.

"Provincial governing bodies: poor enforcement of physicians' duty to report infectious diseases.

"Manufacturers: misleading information provided to and crucial information withheld from Health Canada with respect to product safety."

These key findings now form the basic principles of the Canadian blood supply system. According to the World Health Organization, at least 65 countries do not test all donated blood for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis. Tainted blood still accounts for as much as 5% of HIV infections in Africa. The World Health Organization estimates that six million tests which should be done for infections on donated blood are not carried out.

To repeat comments raised by my colleague and PC health critic Christine Elliott, the member from Whitby, in response to a previous bill, Bill 178: "Plasma obtained from Canadians will be safer, in relative terms. Canada has lower rates of infectious diseases than many other countries, including parts of the US, and Canadians have access to covered health care services."

Importantly, I do want to recognize again Canadian Blood Services, who are doing a great job of ensuring that blood donations are safe and that trust and faith in our blood supply system is maintained.

As I say, I often give blood on a personal basis. I am very, very impressed with the process. I'm impressed with how they have our information catalogued. I'm impressed with the process that they put you through, even as you lead up to actually getting the ability to give blood that day. They put you through a very thorough screening test, even though you're already in the system. Although you're a regular donor, they don't skip steps. They ensure that everything is done according to what their protocol is. To the best of my knowledge, all blood units are tested for transmittable diseases, and there is definitely a rigorous process for screening donors.

I'm now going to turn a little bit of my thought process to the second component of this bill, which mandates the College of Pharmacists to inspect and license all hospital pharmacies in Ontario. This part of the bill is in response to the underdosing of 1,202 chemo patients in 2012-13. The social policy report titled *Diluted Chemotherapy Drugs* found that patients in four hospitals in Ontario and one in New Brunswick had received diluted doses of chemotherapy drugs and that the company supplying the drugs was unregulated.

The contract to purchase these drugs was between the pharmaceutical company and a group purchasing organization called MedBuy. The hospitals were not party to the purchasing contract for the product. The recommendation was that group purchasing organizations and shared service organizations be subject to audits by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario to provide oversight in order to maintain transparency and accountability in procurement practices in the health care sector.

We support any improvement to Ontario's hospital drug supply system and patient safety. Obviously, patient safety is number one, and it needs to be. It's actually why, in this House, this week and a little bit last week, with the tabling of the Ornge report, I have stood up and I

wanted to ensure that there is transparency and accountability and proper oversight in place. It's a concern that I've tried to raise, not being necessarily personally critical of the minister, but we continue to hear in this House: "We'll do this next time. We'll take action afterwards." Yet there has been a lag of two years, in some cases, before we actually get to there.

1620

What we want to ensure—certainly what I want to ensure when I'm talking about legislation and regulation in this House—is that we're doing everything in our power to prevent it from happening the first time and certainly the second time. We all have to be diligent, and we all have to ensure that we're standing here every day thinking of patient safety, constituent safety, taxpayer safety—people. Regardless of what title we give them, it's all about people and what we're doing to ensure that they have the most safe practices in our country, in the great province of Ontario and in each of our respective ridings.

The chemo scandal, sadly, was an example of the Ministry of Health dropping the ball yet again, and we're definitely looking to the new minister to ensure that this never happens again. That's why I stand in this House and challenge—my role as a member of Her Majesty's official opposition is to challenge the government, to ensure that practices are there, and where I think there are opportunities for improvement, to offer those suggestions. We certainly want to be able to be a solution base. We want to accept them at their word that they want to reach out and work in co-operation. But at the end of the day, if we don't see that, then we're going to continue to bring these messages to this table.

I've received a couple of pieces of correspondence recently, and I'm just going to reference them here. We received a letter from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. They, I believe, are generally in support of the intent of the bill, and are quite willing, again, to work collaboratively with the government and with all three parties in this House to ensure that there is good legislation going forward. What they see as essential amendments—that's not saying it's a "should have" or a "could have" or a "we might do." "Essential" to me says, "Do not move forward with this policy unless you're truly going to listen to the input." I believe the College of Physicians and Surgeons are at the front end. They're the people who are going to be impacted with regard to this legislation, when it's implemented, to be the carriers of it, to be the enforcers of it, to be the delivery body of it. So I really think it's important that we sit down with these groups and that we have a very thorough consultation.

I've also received correspondence from the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario. Again, they're suggesting, generally, that—I should give a little bit of background. Some of the people at home may not know, as I didn't—when you become a member of Parliament, you get a lot more information than I ever would have imagined we'd get, on almost an hourly basis.

In this case, the Federation of Health Regulatory College of Ontario is "the umbrella group for 26 regulatory colleges (including three transitional councils) for the health professions governed under the Regulated Health Professions Act.... Colleges have a statutory mandate to protect the public interest through regulation of health care providers (e.g., registration, complaints and discipline, quality assurance, patient relations program). Together, the 26 colleges govern more than 300,000 health professionals in Ontario."

I think we would be abdicating our responsibility, if you will, and our accountability if we did not take time to consult the collective wisdom of 300,000 of our front-line health care practitioners. "The federation"—again, this is right in the correspondence—"supports the objectives on which Bill 117 is based. We believe that the bill has been introduced to enhance the ability of RHPA colleges to regulate their members and pharmacies, in the public interest. It includes provisions to help ensure patient safety, including enhancing the ability of colleges to disclose serious concerns to other authorities, that attempt to close gaps preventing colleges from receiving important information about the misconduct of practitioners and that reduce unnecessary activities that consume significant resources."

Again, I want to reinforce here: These are the folks at the front line. These are the folks who are going to be bound and forced, if you will, depending on the decree of the legislation, to move forward. So we need to ensure that we have their input so we do it right. We don't want to put out legislation at any time, I believe, that is saying, "You shall do this," without having had proper consultation, without having the input and insights of those people who are at the front lines, who have the best practices, who are looking not just for today; they're looking at what the consequences are, both good and unintended negative consequences.

One of the things that I think I've been saddened by a little bit, since becoming a member—it's certainly been a privilege and a pleasure to be here for three years representing the great people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and I'm thankful that they re-elected me in the last election to continue to be their representative. I think what we want to ensure is that we have legislation that truly is going to be representative and in the best interests of all the people.

We want it to be efficient. We don't want to have waste in the system. We don't want to do things and then have to come back here and re-debate over and over because we didn't think it through the first time. Many of my mentors—one of the things that sticks with me is, do it right the first time, because we don't have the luxury of resources. Right now, our government is in a significant financial crunch. There are not the resources because of mismanagement over the last 11 years. There is a lot of money that has been wasted, and we just don't have the luxury of being able to redo things.

This is a prime example of legislation where I think there's no expediency to have to do this. It's very conten-

tious. As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, there is a lot of complexity in regard to many components of this bill. They combine two different bills, previous health legislation Bill 178 and Bill 117, that died on the order paper, sadly, because we went to election.

We want to ensure that we're bringing this back now—let's do it properly. There's no big rush. We've got a four-year mandate from the people of Ontario, so let's slow this thing down. There's no need for the government to expedite it and push it through without having proper consultation.

I'm going to talk about a couple of specifics that the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario have shared with me and asked that I bring forward to ensure, again, that we're having that open, accountable and transparent discussion on a topic of this significance.

They want to question and to get more information, if nothing else, to ensure that they understand the word "discretion" in the registrar's screening of complaints, sections 12 to 17 of the bill.

The federation supports the purpose of the amendment and sees it as a very important element in the bill. "Colleges have devoted far too many resources to investigating complaints that do not serve any public interest. We want to devote those resources to complaints that have an impact on the public and would enable colleges to better protect the public."

We want to ensure the effectiveness of that word "discretion." Sometimes a word like "discretion" actually opens the door, in some cases, to an unintended consequence that may not serve the greater need of the bill.

Another area they have is the area of a time frame. The federation is concerned about the amount of time permitted for the step in regard to looking at complaints or concerns.

"Complaints are supposed to be dealt with in 150 days"—1-5-0, Mr. Speaker. "By adding this additional step and providing the complainant 30 days to decide whether or not to seek a review of the registrar's determination, the 150-day timeline becomes increasingly impossible to meet. The federation suggests that in subsection (9) of section 12 of Bill 117, complainants be given 14 days to decide on whether to request a review."

Again, I think it's well thought out. I think it's a good, rational concern that they've brought to our attention. All they're asking is, let's have some more discussion. Let's have open dialogue to make sure that the end product truly serves the people: first and foremost, the safety of the patient, the person receiving the service; and secondly, of course, the service delivery and the front-line personnel that are delivering these.

They also share a little bit of a concern: "The enhanced reporting duty in Bill 117 now turns on whether the person who grants the member privileges has 'reasonable grounds to believe' that the resignation, relinquishment or restriction is 'related to' the member's misconduct, incompetence or incapacity. This is a really high legal test. In such a case, a person who wanted to avoid a reporting duty would simply have to state that he

or she did not believe that the action was related to the member's competence or incapacity, in order to avoid the reporting duty."

Mr. Speaker, hopefully, most of our systems are on the merit system and people will do the right thing, but there are certain circumstances when that doesn't happen. I think we have to ensure, when we're writing legislation, utilizing words like "discretion," that we have to be more black and white. We have to give people clear, defined terms, so that they all are working from the same page; we're all in the same ballpark, talking the same language and understanding it so that we don't go through this myriad of administrative bureaucracy and spinning paper for the sake of spinning paper.

In many cases, the people on the other end need timely results; they need to be able to move through the system properly. I think we need to do due diligence in that case as well.

"Appointing college supervisors, section 9 of the bill:

"Under the bill, the provisions permitting cabinet to appoint a supervisor over a college will be modified. The federation appreciates why this amendment is being proposed. The federation urges you to raise concerns that you may have with a particular college early and often so as to resolve concerns and to avoid, wherever possible, resorting to this extraordinary power."

Again, I think the reality here is that they're saying there are mechanisms; there are ways we can ensure that there's a timely, efficient process, and let's not let it get bogged down in administritivia because of the unintended consequence of a certain word, term or definition.

"Additional exceptions to the confidentiality duty, sections 10-11 of the bill:

"... three new exceptions have been created, enabling colleges to disclose otherwise confidential information. The proposed new grounds for disclosing confidential information are as follows:

"(1) for the administration of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (e.g. concerns about communicable diseases);

"(2) to a public hospital in relation to a pending complaint or s. 75 registrar's investigation in accordance with regulations initiated by the minister; and

"(3) to any other person named in the regulations, in relation to a pending complaint or s. 75 registrar's investigation in accordance with regulations initiated by the minister....

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"Colleges have access to information that sometimes can be of assistance to other regulators and participants in the health care system. However, the importance of the information varies significantly. Some of the information would not be of much value to others (e.g., alleged rudeness by a practitioner). Some of the information could be of significant value to others (e.g., about communicable diseases; about a developing pattern of treatment errors or risks). In addition, even where the information is significant, there is great variability as to the reliability of the information."

They've given me very, very specific situations that I think are good to feed back to committee. Hopefully that's where this bill will go: back to a committee that will take the time and effort to consult widely. They need to ensure that that happens. But I think what their concern is is that you don't want to add unnecessary administrative burden. You don't want to add things into the system that are going to slow things down and not allow answers to be made in a timely and efficient manner, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ensure that I've conveyed the proper message today. You have two pretty significant groups, both the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario, that generally are supportive. I'm not going to quote, but I think they're generally supportive of this bill. They just want to ensure that we're doing the right thing and that we slow things down to make sure we get it right the first time.

I want to just give a little bit of an outline as well in regard to—again, I'm going to repeat—Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. There are actually six acts that are going to be impacted: Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, a new one; Health System Improvements Act, 2007; Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act; Public Hospitals Act, a new one; Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991; and Trillium Gift of Life Network Act.

I want to reiterate what I said earlier in regard to schedule 1, Voluntary Blood Donations Act. This schedule 1 prohibits the sale of plasma or blood products in the province. This is in response to Canadian Plasma Resources setting up locations to collect and compensate donors for plasma. I'm not really going to get into a discussion today, Mr. Speaker, and try to convince people whether you should or shouldn't believe that there should be an organization or entity able to do this. What I think I want to bring more to the people of Ontario, and certainly to the people of this Legislature who will ultimately make the decision, is that there are options that we need to be looking at. There are situations where I think we can't just be closed-minded until we at least explore all available avenues and get the true facts on the table and look at it from all sides, which is what I think most of us do. Certainly that's what I try to do every day when I come here from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I want to make sure I have the facts, I want to look at both sides of an issue and I want to make the most educated, balanced decision that I can.

Currently, Ontario does not collect enough plasma to be completely self-sustaining. I've said a number of times in this House already in this short half-hour—it may seem long to you, Mr. Speaker, but for me it has been a short half-hour so far—that I think we have a tremendous voluntary outpouring of support to give blood. But I'm not certain, with some of the things I've suggested to you with regard to Alzheimer's and dementia specifically, but even just with our seniors' more acute-care needs out in our communities—there are a lot of

situations. My colleague Laurie Scott from the nursing practice industry—really, what it comes down to is that I have the utmost respect for nurses. I worked at Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, right beside the Wiarton Hospital, at the bottom of the doctors' offices in Wiarton. What I saw were nurses, day in and day out, giving their heart and soul to those patients. You know why they did that? Because they truly are caring, compassionate people. But at the end of the day, I think what I really gleaned from them the most is that they put everything aside except the first and foremost principle of their day: the health and well-being of that patient sitting in front of them. I think this is the type of thing with blood services that we need to be thinking about, because that supply of blood may become critical to someone's life in a very distinct situation.

I heard, I think last night, on an ad as I was listening—I think it was television; I can't remember if it was television or radio—that they were asking if the public knew how many units of blood are needed for one car accident victim. Some people said, "Five," and they said, "No." Someone said, "Twenty," and they said, "Double that, plus"—so 50 units of blood for one car accident victim. Again, we need to ensure that we have that supply. I can't give enough credit to those people who truly do voluntarily give of themselves. It is in you to give, as I've said. I want to just give that plug for that line a couple of times while I'm here today.

We need to be looking. What happens if we don't have that supply? Where do we go to get that supply? I've shared with you that the plasma and the plasma protein that we need to derive from blood—right now there's about 600,000 to 700,000 units, but that is purported to increase. Where are we going to get that? Can we guarantee that the voluntary sector will be able to step up if that doubles in the next five years? I'm not certain. Yes, Ontarians and Canadians are the most giving in the world, but we can't guarantee that, so we need to be prepared. And the Minister of Health, regardless of what stripe, is responsible for that at the end of the day. I think what you want to do is set yourself up for success. You want to set yourself up to ensure that you have protocols and a backup plan in place. So it is a very complex discussion that we need to be having.

Ontario collects enough plasma for transfusion but does not produce enough plasma protein products to be entirely self-sufficient. We currently purchase 70% of our plasma protein products from the United States, from paid and unpaid donors. I want to spend a few minutes on this because, again, there are some people who have certainly talked to me individually, anecdotally, saying, "I just don't believe in paid. It's the wrong thing. It's not ethical. It's not the right way to go." Again, I'm not here to convince you one way or the other, nor even try to go down that road. What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that you may actually be getting a blood unit right now that is from the United States, which actually was done through a paid donor.

I think we can't be closed to the fact that if we don't have enough volunteers and your loved one, your child

the age of our pages and younger, needs that unit of blood, at the end of the day, are you going to make that a real discussion about whether it was a paid or unpaid donor of blood? If it was one of my sons, Zach or Ben, lying in a hospital bed needing a unit of blood, whether it's paid or unpaid is going to be way, way back on my list of concerns at that time. What I want to know is that when my child—young adult; they probably don't want me to call them a child anymore—is in that situation, the blood is there and available to them when they need it. This is life and death at times. We don't have time to go back and consult. We don't go back in time to review this policy. We need to ensure that it's in place.

Plasma is often used in pharmaceutical products that help combat Alzheimer's and hemophilia. It has been addressed that we could have a shortage. We need to understand what those realities are. We need to explore it with people at the front end of the table, the stakeholders, the people who are truly in the business and truly understand the ramifications of what we're talking about. I think when this originally came into the House, there was a fairly short discussion more of the ethical side of things, but I don't think we ever spent enough time truly making sure that the public was informed. As a consumer, I certainly had no idea of the types of numbers we're talking about. I had no idea that there could be shortages like that. To be honest, I didn't even know that there was paid or unpaid. Fortunately, no one in my family at that point had needed to have a transfusion, although I did lose my dear sister Marge to cancer a number of years ago, and she did end up having some blood transfusions.

Again, as I said a few minutes ago, at the end of the day, whether it was paid—you know what?—if it was going to help keep my sister alive, I don't really care where that came from. Some people will hold those very highly. That's fine, and I'm open to that. But what I want to do is make sure that this bill addresses the true needs that are out there, the true shortages that we could be experiencing somewhere down the road—not too far down the road, particularly with that baby boom coming at us—and I think we need to ensure that we have a system in place that we're all comfortable with, that we're actually very comfortable and confident in our government of the day and our agencies that are going to provide, that we have the blood supply in place.

I want to touch again on the fact that much of the blood we bring in, 70%, comes from the United States and/or Europe, and that blood, in many cases, is from a paid donor. There are certain times that obviously we want to ensure that we can get all of it, but I think it has been stated clearly by a couple of different groups in our research that there aren't sufficient resources, so we have to look outside and look at new ways of doing this.

I want to talk really briefly, Mr. Speaker, about schedule 2, which talks about amendments respecting the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning the regulated health professions. Although he's not here right now in the House with us—I think he's out doing

some meetings. Dr. Jeff—I don't know if he's actually a doctor; I call him the mad scientist, but he's a pharmacist in any case, and I believe “Dr.” is part of his title, although Jeff would never want that to be used. I have to say it's been an absolute privilege, along with my colleague Laurie Scott, a nurse whom I've already referenced—having them right in our caucus; in fact, in front of me right now, that I can ask a question, has been absolutely a privilege and a value that I can't say enough about. Being able to talk to Jeff—and back home, when I was executive director of the Bruce Peninsula—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would just remind the member that we speak of members' ridings and not their names.

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Mr. Bill Walker: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I shouldn't have said “Laurie Scott” from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, or “Jeff Yurek” from Elgin-Middlesex-London. And I won't say “the mad scientist” again, because that probably goes way past the line there, Mr. Speaker. It truly is, though—having their ability.

As I was saying, in my former life, I was executive director of the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, and we did a capital campaign. Two people who really stood out and, again, taught me tremendously were Cristine and Richard Bouillon. They were the local pharmacists in town. They chaired the capital campaign to raise \$3 million in the Bruce Peninsula for the Lion's Head Hospital and the Wiarton Hospital—\$1.5 million in a very sparsely rural community—but health care obviously stood up for them; they stood up for health care. The things that they were able to share with me have been invaluable even coming into this job as a member of provincial Parliament, to understand how the pharmacy works.

Again, in my deputy health critic role, it has been a pleasure to work with our health critic, Christine Elliott from Whitby. I want to make sure we get the ridings correct, Mr. Speaker. Having that capacity to work under Christine's tutelage—her years of experience here and the things that she has been able to accomplish—has been absolutely wonderful. She has also been able to allow me the opportunity to go out and meet with a lot of the groups—so things like this—and again today gave me the privilege to present this hour of what I hope you will find a very interesting and factual discussion about a topic that is very complex and challenging. But she and Jeff—sorry. The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London and Ms. Scott from—Kawartha Lakes-Brock?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Mr. Bill Walker: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Sorry. It's a good thing that I'm not the Speaker, Mr. Speaker, because I would mess up these riding names all over the place, and these are the ones that I should probably know fairly well. Anyway, I digress.

We need to make sure that we have that access. I'm trying to make the point here so it is relevant to the conversation that having access to people who have actually

worked on the front lines, who have had experience, is invaluable, because they bring the practical nature. They are not talking theory. They are not talking hypothetical. They are not talking partisan speaking points. What they're talking is, here's truly how the system works or doesn't work and how we can improve it.

In the case of the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, it redefines hospital and community pharmacies to all be considered as one type of pharmacy in terms of inspection. After the chemotherapy underdosing incident—on which we hope the government of the day has taken proactive measures so that it can never happen again—this ensures that all institutions are inspected properly.

I think it was our old-age homes that in the last session we talked about—where there were a number of old-age homes, seniors' residences, that were supposed to be inspected on a regular basis and haven't been. Again, one of the roles of the official opposition and the third party is to ensure that we're holding the government to account on these things. Those inspections play a critical role, and we need to do that in a timely and effective manner so that, again, it doesn't become a bureaucratic ticky-box exercise; it truly is something that is serving the end population user.

The Public Hospitals Act provides greater reporting to the College of Physicians and Surgeons when a physician leaves for misconduct. This allows for greater transparency in government and makes physicians more accountable.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about transparency and accountability, certainly in the last couple of weeks. The Liberal government of the day has actually introduced a bill. It's one that I'm paying close attention to because—and I don't mean this in any other way than just being factual—I think there are times that there is a lot of transparency and accountability lacking. In the last couple of weeks, they have introduced time allocation for a couple of very important acts in this House because they wanted to push them through on their agenda, as opposed to taking time.

The child care act—I think it's Bill 10—is one example of that. Our member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop—I think I did that right that time; I did the riding—has been in this House, as the very qualified critic of education, pleading with the education minister and the government to allow us to go out into the community, to go out and truly do what I believe one of the symbols in this House suggests: to actually listen and go out and hear from the people that we're here and given the privilege and pleasure to represent.

They've denied that, Mr. Speaker. It's a little tough to vote for a transparency and accountability act when those types of things happen.

Another one—and I need to be able to utilize it, so I hope you're able to see where I'm going with it, Mr. Speaker—is that with the gas plant scandal, we wanted to call the two key witnesses that actually were the closest to the truth, Peter Faist and Laura Miller. We wanted to ensure that at the end—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Well, yes, it's very relevant because we're talking about accountability and transparency, and this is part of the act that your government has introduced. So I want to ensure that I'm drawing the parallel that we want that. I think all members on this side, both the official opposition and the third party, want to ensure that there's absolute transparency and accountability, but you can't do that if you rush things through. You can't do that if you shut down debate. You can't do that if you use time allocation as a tool to expedite your needs as opposed to the needs of the greater populace, those being the people of Ontario.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You're starting to sound like me in opposition.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would be honoured to sound like you in opposition, the member from St. Catharines, the Honourable Jim Bradley.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: He has only been here 100 years.

Mr. Bill Walker: Yes. I've only got—well, I won't go there. But I certainly hope that at some point I can have your esteemed talent to be a cabinet minister some day and be able to carry out these great acts on behalf of the people.

Interjection.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Join us next week.

Mr. Bill Walker: No. There's a true answer in Parliament right there: no. But thank you for the offer; very kind of you.

The Regulated Health Professions Act allows cabinet to appoint a supervisor to a health professions college when necessary.

All of these things, again, have merit. They have probably the right intent, but let's take time to really have open dialogue and discussion, to ensure that we're doing the right thing at every step.

The bill would prohibit the sale of plasma, a concern from the previous session—again, valid. Even today, we had a very solemn ceremony to start off our session of Parliament this morning, looking forward to Remembrance Day next week, from all the three speakers, who I believe did an absolutely admirable job of truly speaking about what's important to us collectively as Canadians, Ontarians and just citizens of this great and wonderful country, and that is to be able to have open dialogue and dissenting views and be able to say them wherever and whenever you wish, without fear of reprimand. I think we all need to hold on to that near and dear, and this is one of those. People are going to come on either side of this issue, whether to sell or be paid to give blood or not, but I think what we want to do is ensure that we put the big need out front. What is that need going to be down the road? Whether it's a year down the road—it could be in a month. We could have some kind of catastrophic incident come into our province, and we would need that supply of blood. We need to be prepared. We can't be saying, "We'll study it for a couple of years" or "We'll get to that somewhere down the road." We need to be on top of that.

About two and a half weeks ago with the Ebola scare, one of my jobs and one of my roles as opposition critic was to challenge the current Minister of Health, saying, "Are you truly prepared? Have you got your plan?" Equally as important is the communications plan so that everyone involved is ready when that incident may happen in their community or in their home base—in a riding, in our case. What I want to ensure is that all of our hospitals, our health units, everyone was on a coordinated basis and ahead of the game. They weren't waiting three days after something happened to say, "We'll have a plan."

The minister, I think, has learned some of the lessons from SARS. I believe that he and the interim public health director have things relatively in hand. But also in that case, I heard from hospitals in my jurisdiction, as well as from some of my colleagues, that hospitals were being forced to put in some potential protocols of buying equipment, doing training, so that they're prepared. On one side, that's a very valid and admirable way to do it because you want those people to be prepared, but then if you did more research, the reality was, "What is that impacting currently?" because a lot of our hospitals are working on shoestring budgets. There's going to be overtime for the training. You're going to be bringing in supplies on a budget that may be very close to not being able to be balanced.

When I asked when those hospitals would be compensated for those extra measures that were directed by the minister, he said, "Trust me; the money will come." When? No answer, Mr. Speaker. That didn't leave the hospital administrators, who have a very challenging job—how they would do that.

Then you start to get questions from your constituency, saying, "So, if you add"—let's just say—" \$100,000 into a budget for one of those hospitals that are already at the line from a deficit perspective, what are they pulling out of there?" You're either pulling out people, programs or services. Certainly in rural Ontario there isn't a lot of fat in the budgets that I know, and I work pretty close to the hospital sector.

What I want to—again, not that you don't want to have the ability to take action, but sometimes, do we really need it to the full bore and go overboard when there are going to be daily health impacts? Are we going to cut a service to someone currently for the potential of what happens? I'll admittedly agree that that's a daunting balancing act for someone like the Minister of Health because if he's not prepared, then there are going to be concerns; if he over-prepares, then there are going to be impacts today.

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But what I'm trying to say—it again says, "Let's have a balanced approach." Let's understand, with all of the people who can bring good knowledge to the table, and let's do the best that we can to put that in place proactively. Let's have positive public discussion. Let's have it out in the communities, like Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

I still can't understand why a government who purport to be education leaders would not allow people to go out into the community, from all three parties, to have that discussion: to truly say, "We're listening to you Ontarians collectively. We want to understand," and then we'll come back to this honoured House and create legislation that will truly be representative and serve them in their best interests.

That is one that you've heard a lot of discussion about in this House in the last couple of weeks. You'll continue to hear about it. I think you're going to see some public rallies from people out there who don't feel they've been served properly because that bill was moved forward so quickly without public consultation. I just don't want that to happen, certainly with a bill like Bill 21. Blood can be life or death. If you're that person—and again, my colleague sitting in front of me, Laurie Scott from—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Mr. Bill Walker: —Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock; I'll get that eventually. It's easier just to say "Peterborough," but I know that goes in a whole different direction.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, we've got pieces of it.

Mr. Bill Walker: Yes, you do.

But I think, again, she's been, as a nurse, to see those types of situations, and what you want to do is to always be the person who can be ahead of that curve and be able to have the blood to save that life or to help that life be maintained, rather than be searching for it after the fact and be in a panic mode.

There are a lot of things in here that we get into in regard to schedule 1, the donations. It would make it illegal to pay or offer to pay for blood or blood products, including plasma. This is one, again, where I think that that complexity, that personal way that you look at this issue—you know, you may go on either side. But for me, if my son, any of my family or friends or anyone in this House is lying in a bed and the whole issue is whether you want to pay or not pay—if that's the reality, if you're 100,000 units short tomorrow, I think that you want to find a solution that is going to allow us to get that supply back to where we need it to be.

If it has to be paid for, particularly when there are other jurisdictions that are already doing it—I don't hear any horror stories, to be honest. I haven't seen any major media scandals about it in the United States or Europe, where they do this.

Again, if the facts speak for themselves, we actually import blood products today that are via paid donations, so at the end of the day, even on the moral side of it, that unit that you have allowed for your loved one to be transfused could be from paid. I can probably stand pretty comfortably saying that not, certainly, any family member that has had the luxury or the benefit of blood donation is going to come back and say, "I want you to take that out, because I've now learned that it was paid for." If it's going to save the life of a loved one, then I think that we have to be open to that, and we have to be

looking at the reality that there could be a shortage, and how we are going to address that.

Bill 21 provides an exception for Canadian Blood Services to pay for blood or blood products in an emergency situation. Again, an emergency in my mind suggests—that doesn't mean that you've got two weeks to debate this and call down to somewhere to get a supply. An emergency, particularly in an emergency room setting, is minutes—seconds—so you want that blood supply available to you. You want it sitting there in the hospital so that that patient immediately receives that service and that transfusion. You can't be saying, "Well, yeah, it's an emergency, and we'll get to it in a day, a week or an hour." You need it there, so I think we need to look at that.

Bill 21 allows research studies to compensate for blood or blood products. However, this does not include research studies with pharmaceutical products. Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I've shared with you earlier today about the realities of Alzheimer's and dementia, and there is some value in plasma products being used to potentially provide a solution, and hopefully a cure.

Certainly that's what I hold out for; I've unfortunately had some family members afflicted with dementia and Alzheimer's, and it saddens me, as it would all of us in this House, to see anybody go through any of that type of illness if there's a prevention. So we need to ensure with legislation that we're not inadvertently, unintentionally putting consequences in place that would ever prohibit us from being able to do that.

Again, for me, if it's the case that you don't have enough because of a lack of a voluntary supply, and you can find a way to make that happen in a viable manner from paid donations, then I think we have to look at that, and I would be prepared, I think, to at least explore that reality and really understand just where the public does lie on it. I'm not certain in my riding, to be absolutely honest, that I've had anyone truly bring this to me for or against paid or unpaid, so it's something that I think, again, having a good, frank discussion, having the ability to go out and meet with stakeholders who are going to be impacted, is certainly the way we want to go with this.

Again, schedule 2, the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act: I just want to touch on that a little bit more. It sets amendments that would classify all community and hospital pharmacies as pharmacies for inspection purposes. I think, again, the intent here is probably admirable. The whole idea is that we're going to treat all facilities in a like manner so that they're all getting inspected. Being proactive in inspecting and ensuring that there are no shortfalls or gaps is a good thing. I think that is certainly a wise step forward to making sure that there are inspection protocols in place.

I think there is a fine balance for this type of thing. Again, many of the things I hear across my riding, not necessarily on blood but on a lot of things, is the over-administration—now we're putting 15 inspections in place that are just wasting people's time, particularly private industry, who don't have the luxury of a lot of

spare staff. They're running on very shoestring budgets. The abattoirs were one of those where I heard continually that the overburden of inspection—you had regulated inspection by the federal guys; you had provincial folks coming in. It became a point of, "When do I ever serve my customer? I'm spending all my time doing yet another inspection report."

To the end degree of those, most are highly inspected and regulated. I think we always have to strike a good, fair balance. From a health and safety and wellness perspective, inspections are a good thing: The ability to send someone in who is looking at it through a fine filter. But let's not overburden business and/or public institutions that are then taking away—and I will always be the person who stands here and says that our absolute, first and foremost thought process should be about the patient or the front-line care and service that we provide. If anything administrative and bureaucratic is not adding to the value of that, then I think we have to have a good, hard look at it and say, "Is that really what we want? Is that really what we can afford?" And I don't mean afford in the financial context. I truly mean resource-wise. When you're hearing about waiting lists of all varieties, what are we doing to get rid of those and to get more people through the system to get the care that they need, as opposed to holding someone to account for yet another report and yet another inspection?

So that one—again, I think I like the intent of it. I certainly have the thought process that it would be to ensure that there are the best and safest practices in each of our facilities, whether it be a pharmacy in a hospital or out of hospital, but I think we just want to make sure that we're, again, not setting the table where there can be unlimited inspections of those types of facilities.

As I've mentioned here, the biggest thing with this bill is that we're taking six different bills and we're trying to lump them all in. We saw this again the other day with a piece of legislation, and I think in that case, we referred to it as an omnibus bill. There were 12 different acts that were involved. Regardless of anything that you're doing, taking 12 legislative acts and combining them into one certainly gives me concern at times. How thoroughly have we gone through those? What are, again, the unintended consequences, perhaps, of trying to combine and bundle those all together? Are we going to lose some of the good pieces? Are we going to lose pieces of that legislation that are not going to be of benefit to the people of Ontario, who we are here to serve?

In this case, I think we've taken a number of different acts—this was tabled earlier as Bill 178 and Bill 117, and now rolls in seven acts. I'm a little concerned about where we're going. I'm concerned, particularly—I don't want to belabour it, but I do want to put it on record again that, in this House in the last couple of weeks, we've actually had time allocation come through for some of the bills that we were agreeing to debate and wanted to debate. We wanted to have full, open accountability and transparency. We wanted to have the ability to consult the people that we serve. We wanted to go out

into the community. It's always good, I think, to go out and meet with the stakeholders, the people on the front lines, so that they feel comfortable and confident that they've had their input and they've been able to bring thought processes that might be of value, that are solution-based, that might improve our systems. If we just continually think, "We can do this in the ivory towers of downtown Toronto," I don't think we serve the people well that we're truly given the privilege to serve. I want to make sure we always slow down and take the time to do those types of things.

On the broader thought process of health care, I think we need to be looking at all processes that we have, all systems that we have, and ensure that they're meeting the needs of today. The health funding formula for small, rural hospitals is one where I've always had concerns that we've used a formula that has been in place for a number of years. Many things in the world have changed since those formulas were designed. It probably worked extremely well back in the day when we had lots of resources, lots of financial surpluses. We're certainly not in that situation today.

1700

When I look at the amount of debt and deficit that the Liberal government has accumulated and the amount of money that we're spending every year on interest payments that aren't going to the front line of health care, it causes me concern when you bring any bill into this House and see that it's being expedited and steamrolled.

Even the title, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act—we need to ensure we consult with those who are most impacted. We need to ensure that the doctors and the nurses at the front line are certainly part of the process and understand the implications, even the good intentions.

As I referenced to you earlier, Mr. Speaker, we've had a very credible organization, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, come and bring their comments, and they're generally supportive of the bill in its first intent. But they came to us as the official opposition, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, to say, "We need to ensure that we have the ability to consult, that we can give you good, positive, constructive feedback to make sure that this legislation is effective." I think most people out there would think, when a group like that is taking the time to come to us, that there is some validity and that we will honour that by trying to push for those times to debate the various pieces of the legislation.

Again, the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario—a federation of 26 regulatory colleges representing and governing more than 300,000 health professionals in Ontario. I'm not certain how anybody in here could refute, when somebody's representing 300,000 health professionals, that talking about the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act would be a good idea. We want to ensure that we do that.

We want to ensure the ability of people to have a blood supply, and that's what I think we're coming down to here. We know that our older demographic is moving

through. The baby boom is coming through. It's going to create a whole lot of situations that today we may not be facing. But we can't wait until after the fact. We can't wait, and we certainly don't want to see things like the Ornge fiasco happen, where, again, a lot of resources were wasted, a lot of things happened that were inappropriate, and certainly not for the benefit of the patient. We want to ensure that we're not going through that.

And then we get a report, and I've been pushing again in the House here to ask the government of the day, and particularly the minister and the Premier: What are you going to do with that report? If you don't implement and you don't really go back and make sure that the oversight and accountability are in there, then you are doing a disservice to the people of Ontario. It can't happen again. We just can't allow that to happen. Regardless of how it happened the first time, we can't allow that to happen, not when we've had the ability—and we had an all-party committee agree to these recommendations. We can't allow that to happen.

I certainly bring to this revered House my thought process of trying to have balance, to be able to look at both sides of any issue to find the truth, the facts, and again, put people at the front of every decision that we make, particularly in health care. Regardless of whether I have the title of health care critic or not, I will always have that as my absolute core, because at the end of the day, that's what we're all here for. We want a healthy, productive life for every single one of our citizens, from those great pages who have served us for the last number of weeks to the seniors who I love to spend time with and everyone in between.

I want to take my last few seconds and really say thank you again to all of the pages, those who are in the House and those who aren't in the House, because when we stand here debating a bill like Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, the decisions we're making in this House will impact you today and they will impact you for many years to come—not just you, but your loved ones. You truly are the leaders. You're the next generation. We're going to pass that torch to you. What we need to do in good service to you and to all of the people of Ontario is ensure that when we're bringing bills like this, when we're bringing legislation, we're looking at it in a balanced manner and we're engaging all of the front-line stakeholders who actually can bring positive, valuable contributions, and ensure that at the end of the day we have practical, balanced legislation that is going to be enacted for, truly, the betterment of the health and the care of those people we are given the privilege to serve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, that was a long speech; if nothing else, it was long and had a lot of interesting information. Some of the personal anecdotes were important. I think the fact that the member has donated as frequently as he has is to be commended. For those who are able to do so, his suggestion that this be a widespread

practice is very, very helpful. Some are not in a position to donate blood and some are. I've always admired the people who—and you mentioned that some of the real heroes of this are people who over the years have donated way beyond what you normally expect people to donate.

We want to ensure that the blood, of course, is going to be healthy blood, that it's indeed going to be helpful. There's no question that we want to see this legislation pass.

I hear the member make references from time to time about time allocation. I can recall when I was opposition House leader that while there was a lot of protesting about time allocation, in their heart of hearts very often the opposition actually wanted the government to impose time allocation because then they could denounce it. In fact, when I was government House leader, I recall time allocation being imposed over a pay raise, and the then leader of the third party, now deceased, came to me at that time and said, knowing that he didn't have unanimous support—and he wouldn't mind having me tell this story. But he came to me and said, "Do you have any time allocation motions?" I said, "I have six. Which one would you like?" And one of the six I pulled out—I said, "But you're going to denounce the fact that I am implementing this time allocation motion." He said, "Yes, that's part of the game, but you recognize that's it."

We're working hard with time allocation to get consent, but when it's necessary we will allow for a programmed way of dealing with bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments. The member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the member's comments had to do with the topic at hand, but it was certainly interesting, so I guess that's why you didn't cut him off.

I spend a lot of time in my car these days. It's my first time having a job where I actually have to commute. The member from Windsor–Tecumseh likes to call me Gridlock Gila.

When I am in my car, I listen to talk radio. Just last week, they were talking about how people felt about purchasing blood products. There was one caller who called in. It was very interesting. She mentioned that there are a lot of restrictions on who can give blood. She thinks that's one of the reasons why we have blood shortages, that we have too many restrictions. I thought it was going to be medication or something like that. Obviously, we can't take blood products from people who are on some medications or have health histories that aren't conducive. But she mentioned that she was asked if she had had any medical tests. She had had a colonoscopy within the month, and they asked if she had the results. She said she hadn't gotten the results yet. They said, "Well, then, you can't give blood." She mentioned somebody who had been to Europe maybe 10 or 15 years ago and was told, "You can't give blood because you were in a certain city or a certain country"—and not a Third World country. Maybe that's something that we have to look at. Maybe we have too many restrictions.

Maybe the fact that people are so busy and spending so much time in their cars in gridlock means they don't have time to go give blood. Maybe we have to have mobile units going to people's workplaces more often. I know that there are some.

So maybe we have to look at making it easier for people to give blood, and then we wouldn't have these problems where we're discussing whether or not we have to coerce people, through monetary gain, into giving blood.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to comment to the time allocation portion of the speech that was given, because the member is right: The government has got this penchant, as we say in French, to time-allocate pretty well everything, just as Dalton McGuinty used to do.

I was really interested because I remember a certain House leader by the name of Jim Bradley, the member for what riding, again?

Hon. James J. Bradley: St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. Like you, I don't remember ridings.

I remember him not only as a House leader, that particular member from St. Catharines, Mr. Bradley, but also as a member being apoplectic any time that a government would use time allocation when he was in opposition. There are oodles, as we say in our language, parliamentary language—oodles and volumes of speeches in Hansard dating back many years when that particular member would be just vitriolic against the government for using time allocation, and saying time allocation by any other word is time allocation; it is a closure of debate. It was something else to see. It was mastery at its best.

1710

Now all of a sudden, I just heard the same member say, "Oh, it's programming." Come on, Jim. That's not programming. Programming is when three parties agree to a motion to allow something to go forward in some negotiated method. When you time-allocate or you use closure, those are two means by which the government can cut debate without the approval of either of the opposition parties—or at least one of the opposition parties if you're in a minority Parliament situation.

So I have seen everything. I've been around this place for some years, but I have just heard the dean of the Legislature pronounce himself in favour of time allocation. I can tell you, my good friend Peter Kormos is hitting the roof wherever he's at, saying, "I think I've seen everything now."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to comment on something that the member for Thornhill said which I agreed with.

I find this kind of special, the member for Timmins–James Bay and the member for St. Catharines—because I love them both dearly. They are both fine parliamentar-

ians and both gentlemen of this House who many of us emulate and would go to for advice. But I have this feeling that if the honourable member was sitting there, and the other honourable member was sitting there, we would have just heard those speeches in exact reverse. I just want to point that out.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I didn't like it when we were in government either.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay, neither does he, maybe. I'm just suggesting that you may have more in common than—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to speak to the—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: But to the issue of blood control—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins—James Bay, come to order.

I would ask the member to speak through the Chair.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was trying to find the lightness of the moment. My lightness of being is clearly being dragged down now, so I'll just move on.

Interjection: It's unbearable.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It is unbearable.

The member for Thornhill raises a point. This isn't an issue about blood security, but I don't want it to go—because I appreciate what she said. I used to run the mayor's blood donation clinic when I was a mayor. I knew my HIV antibody status because I had lost 43 friends to AIDS in my 20s, and I got elected in my early 30s. It always seems ironic to me that as someone who probably knew more about my own blood, having been one of the few—well, the only person—in my circle of friends who survived that epidemic at all, that I can never donate blood. I want to just reinforce the point she made.

I don't think there's anyone else, maybe, in this House, unless you're a hemophiliac, who knows more about what their blood health is than a gay man after the AIDS epidemic—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Or if you're a medical doctor; I'm sorry. You know doctors always have to have the last word.

I wanted to make that point. I'm hoping that one day, in light of this, we can work together in a non-partisan way to remove these ridiculous barriers that are based on stereotypes and not based on fact.

I had to fake a blood donation, and I could donate blood—my blood is very clean—but I can't right now legally in Canada simply because I'm gay. I think that's wrong. I think it's not a disservice to me, but it's certainly a disservice to many people who need blood. So thank you to the member for Thornhill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for two minutes for a response.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure for me to respond to colleagues from St. Catharines, Thornhill, Timmins—James Bay, and the Minister of the Environment.

I'm going to take a little touch of my time on the time allocation since it absorbed most of the feedback. It's interesting when I see such an experienced member of the House telling me that time allocation is game-playing. As a newbie here still after three years, hoping to someday be able to serve my constituents as long in a tenured career as the member from St. Catharines, I don't want to play games, Mr. Speaker. I come here every day to try to do the best legislation that I can, to ensure that we're doing the practical things that are going to benefit the people of Ontario. At the end of the day, as I've said in my speech numerous times and almost every time I stand in this House, I want to do the things that are truly going to have a positive impact on the health care and the well-being of the people of Ontario.

This bill in particular is one that I think we have to have that debate on. We have to have good, thorough discussion. We need to be out in the communities. We've had a number of organizations—the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and a number of other groups and organizations—that have spent time lobbying us and telling us that they want to ensure that we have fulsome debate on this and input from those stakeholders who are at the front lines. There are opportunities for research. There are opportunities to look at things through a new lens.

As I tried to reinforce through all of my talk, we need to worry about blood security, certainly. We need to worry about the blood supply. How we get there and whether people are opposed to paid donations or whether we want to continue to try to do it voluntarily are certainly matters that everyone has their own right to have an opinion on. But at the end of the day, I think what we need to do is have legislation that ensures that when the time is there, we have an adequate supply of blood so that we don't lose one single life because we did not put legislation in place that was practical, efficient, balanced and reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, it's been an absolute pleasure to discuss this on behalf of our PC health critic, Christine Elliot, from Whitby—I always get those—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Whitby—Oshawa.

Mr. Bill Walker: Whitby—Oshawa, sorry. Thank you very much. It's been a good lesson in learning all the ridings. Maybe Speaker is in my docket yet.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm pleased to join in the debate. The debate on government Bill 21 causes us to look at or examine two areas of our health care system. One is to look at, obviously, the notion or the structure behind blood donation, and the second is to look at pharmacies and the oversight that is necessary in pharmaceuticals.

I'll begin first by talking a little bit about—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You're standing down the lead.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Before I say this, I have to clarify one point. I'm standing down our lead, and I would ask the Clerks' assistance in that. Our health critic will certainly—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has just requested unanimous consent to stand down his lead. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much. My apologies for my lack of knowledge on the procedural component of that.

As I was saying, I will begin my comments around the first question: looking at blood donation and the purpose or principle around voluntary blood donation.

There's a lot of discussion around blood donation as a public resource, that voluntary donation encourages a certain quality in our system. I think it's important to start looking at this. Our position is that I think we have a very strong culture and system of voluntary blood donations, and supporting that is certainly an important step.

I think we also need to look at what are impacts to society on a payment-based blood donation system. How does that affect our society? How does that affect people? And what does it say about the type of world we live in? What are some of the ramifications if we have a system that's based on payment? How does that impact the lives of those people who may be affected by blood donations? More importantly, those who don't have the means to support themselves, people who are vulnerable in our society: Where does that place them in terms of payment-based blood donation systems?

One of the concerns I think is raised is that if you have a system where you are paying for anything in the health care system, it raises the question of the motive. We've seen, time and time again—in the health care system, do we want a system that's driven by a profit model or a system that's driven by sustainability? Do we want a system that's based on what will give us the lowest cost and the highest revenue? Or do we want to look at a system that's driven by quality of care?

I think there's no doubt, when it comes to our health professionals—our doctors, our nurses, our midwives, our institutions of care or hospitals—we certainly believe that quality should take precedence over profits, that we should be driven by sustainable decisions that would create a system that's long-lasting and decision-making that creates the best quality of care. I think that discussion translates very well into this discussion around blood donation. If we want to encourage a strong, sustainable system where we can rely on blood donations that are voluntary, arguably it encourages a higher quality of supply, but it also speaks to that principle that in health care, we don't believe that profits should come into play. They shouldn't form a factor in our decision-making. It's a slippery slope, and it could erode the fabric of our health care system, so there's a reason why a number of health care providers have indicated their support for banning the for-profit plans around blood plasma collection. The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the college of physicians, Canadian Doctors for Medicare, the Council of Canadians, Canadian Blood Services, as well as the Ontario College of Pharmacists, have all indicated their support for banning plasma collection. There's a reason for that—because I think it

speaks to their support of public health care and their support of a system that's based on quality over profits, and I think that's the right decision on that.

1720

Now, some questions have been raised. I think they're important questions, and I think it's important for us to look at this, given that we're examining our system now. Some of our blood supply, whether we want it or not, at the end of the day, if we rely on outside sources, if we rely on blood or plasma from the United States or if we rely on blood or plasma products from Europe—in those jurisdictions, they are actually using a for-profit model, so at the end of the day we have to look at our system and the integrity of our system.

If we believe, in a principled decision, in ensuring that we don't have a for-profit system to collect plasma, but we're relying on other sources of plasma which are for-profit, I think that that's an important discussion. I think it's important for us to look at how we can make our system more inherently consistent, so that we're not relying on outside sources that are for-profit.

At the end of the day, I think the issue that was raised by my colleague in the Conservative Party was that, if we have shortages, if we have circumstances where we don't have adequate supply—what do we do in those cases? I think that that's something that is covered by the bill in the form of, if there are exceptional circumstances, there may be an exception to this ban. Of course, it's certainly something to note.

But what I also have to draw attention to is the fact that, for a number of years, the Liberal government has been aware of this problem. There has been at least one example—there have been a number of them, but there's at least one clear example—of a for-profit clinic that has indicated its desire to basically set up a for-profit model and have that set up here in Toronto. For two years, the government hasn't really taken any initiative on this issue, and I think it's worth noting that delaying taking action has sent a message that the government is not serious about this issue, and now we're having to play catch-up.

I think that that's something that we want to see the government move away from. It's important to make sure that our decision-making is not done in a reactionary manner; we need to be more proactive with our decision-making.

I think that's a great segue into the serious and very tragic scandal or tragedy of the diluted chemotherapy drug incident. You know, 1,200 patients were impacted by this. It's a very serious situation where people who are among the most vulnerable people, people who are at a very serious point in their health, who are facing one of the most scary moments of their life, when they're faced with something like cancer—they rely on our health care system to assist them in that.

The fact that these individuals who, in terms of their health, are so vulnerable, and are relying on a health care system to give them the medication that they need to make sure that they are able to recover from this serious

illness—they found that the drugs that they were prescribed were diluted, were not sufficient, were not providing the right attention to their needs. It was something that we were all struck by. I know that my seatmate from London–Fanshawe was particularly impacted, because a number of the folks who were impacted were actually from the London region.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And Windsor.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And a number also, as my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh indicated, were from Windsor, as well. There were people who were impacted across Ontario, but the fact that there seemed to be a higher number of folks from southwestern Ontario was quite troubling.

This is a serious area, and this is another example of—we entrust our government with one of the most precious things, our health care. It's something that we spend the most money on in terms of our budget, and rightly so; it's something that we really care about, and it affects people in a very meaningful way. It's our biggest budget item. It's a very precious and very valuable item in terms of making sure that our citizens are cared for and receive the appropriate health care.

But the problem is that, time after time, we've seen the government drop the ball on oversight and drop the ball in terms of not having the appropriate measures and appropriate oversight in place to ensure that everything that we do invest in, the health care that we do provide, is the best value for money and is providing adequate care. There's a list now that's building—and it's troubling—of scandals and times or moments where the government has not provided the appropriate level of oversight. We can talk about Ornge and the number of red flags that came up, and despite those red flags, the inaction on the part of the government in terms of responding to those serious problems with our air ambulance system. When we look at eHealth and the serious waste of resources there that could have been used in a more effective manner, to actually provide front-line care—the approximate billion dollars wasted with eHealth is also quite troubling.

This is another example where people who are vulnerable, who are faced with a serious life-threatening illness didn't receive the medication in a manner that would have helped them. It was a very troubling circumstance. Now, the government is responding by ensuring that there is greater oversight. I acknowledge and I salute the fact that the government is taking the right step now. Again, I would love to see—and I know citizens of Ontario would like to see—the government take proactive steps instead of reactive steps. We would like to see the government, instead of waiting for a scandal to happen and then responding, take steps ahead of time to prevent them from happening in the first place. The government has that ability, the government can do that, and it's not taking the right steps.

Another example which connects very well to this is in schedule 2 of this bill: The government is taking steps to further regulate the pharmaceuticals through an

amendment to the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act. Another step, if the government was serious about oversight—this is all about oversight. We have a health care system that is robust, one of the best in the world, but we need to make sure that it receives the appropriate oversight to make sure it does the right job. Now, if you're serious about that—and you are taking some steps here with the pharmaceutical schedule 2—but the problem is that you have another amazing tool that could actually provide some real oversight, and you're not making use of this tool. The Ombudsman of Ontario is a world-class oversight leader, someone who has time and time again shown his skill. His office has shown tremendous proactive steps in terms of making sure that we are receiving the best care in all spheres, whether it's in the recent child care issue, whether it's policing—the Ombudsman has done a great job. Why is this government not including the health care sector in the Ombudsman oversight?

We've seen the government now finally take the step to include the MUSH sector—the municipalities, the universities and the schools, but they've not taken the steps to include the hospitals and health care. The Ombudsman has clearly stated that the office is ready to take that step. The Ombudsman himself has indicated that he is willing to make sure that that oversight falls on his office, and they're ready to do it. They're the most skilled individuals and most skilled office at dealing with oversight, but you're still failing to take that step.

I ask, if you're serious about oversight, and particularly in health care, which is one of our most precious commodities, then please, allow the Ombudsman to have oversight over the health care sector—and we would prevent things like this from happening. That would be a proactive step because, on the ground, individuals could complain, and it could be individuals affected, it could be health care professionals—there is a wide gamut of people who could complain directly to the Ombudsman, that could initiate an investigation, and we could see some immediate steps taken, instead of this tragic situation where 1,200 people are affected in such a dire and devastating manner. So I ask you, if you're serious about making sure that there is strong oversight, that you ensure that we have the Ombudsman included in this discussion and expand his responsibilities to include the health care sector. That's my recommendation in terms of real oversight.

In terms of the steps that we need to take to improve the current system around oversight when it comes to pharmaceuticals, the bill will extend the oversight authority of the College of Pharmacists to include pharmacies in public and private hospitals. The College of Pharmacists already has a role, has a duty in terms of managing their members and ensuring that the members are of the highest standard, of a standard that's appropriate for Ontario, and they do a great job. They already have the infrastructure in place to make sure oversight is conducted for their members. Expanding that to include pharmacies in the public and private hospitals is a much-

needed step. It's something that should have happened a long time ago, but it's an appropriate step. The folks who are in charge of the College of Pharmacists, like I said, have the expertise in this field, have the resources in this field and can ensure that oversight is established.

1730

The college will now have the authority to license and inspect pharmacies within public and private hospitals in the same manner as it currently licenses and inspects community pharmacies. That is something that obviously provides the oversight that we need in the hospital and private hospital regime, so it's a step in the right direction in terms of expanding much-needed oversight.

If you look again at the bill, there are two straightforward areas that we needed the government to take some steps on. There was the issue of blood donations and the issue of the pharmaceuticals. The government is taking steps now in a reactionary manner, but certainly taking the right steps.

I want to ask a number of questions, now that I have the opportunity to do so, with respect to the recommendations that Dr. Jake Thiessen put forward in his report in July 2013. He made 12 recommendations. This bill addresses the final recommendation, recommendation number 12, which states, "The OCP"—the Ontario College of Pharmacists—"shall license all pharmacies operating within Ontario clinics or hospitals."

My first question is, why was it the case previously that this wasn't being done? Why was it the case that there was no oversight over these private clinics in hospitals? Why was this simply overlooked? Again, if we're talking about oversight, we have another very serious issue brewing in our health care sector. If you've seen the problems that arise when oversight isn't present, you've seen that there was the serious scandal of 1,200 patients, 1,200 people—more than that—1,200 families impacted. We know this is a problem. We know there are recommendations set to address this.

We have another problem brewing, and that's in the expansion in the use of more private clinics, broadly speaking. What is this government doing to address that issue? We've recently heard of outbreaks in terms of infections at private clinics. We've heard about some serious problems in terms of the standards of these private clinics. We've seen a shift in terms of the health care system moving from the public sphere into the private sphere.

I ask the government again, if you're serious about oversight and you're taking these two steps now, to look at the private clinic model as well. What does that say about the importance that we hold for our public health care, the fact that we believe in a one-tier system, that everyone is entitled to quality health care? What does it say about our system when we have private clinics and this slow privatization of our health care system? It's a serious issue, and I ask you to look at that more carefully.

We as a party, the Ontario New Democrats, strongly support a public health care model. We believe that everyone is entitled to quality health care, and we don't

want to see the system eroded. More importantly, whatever system we have in place, it's the government's responsibility to ensure that there is proper oversight of it. If we have private clinics right now that are not receiving proper oversight, if their standards of quality and their standards of care are not being examined, this falls solely on the shoulders of the government to do so.

We've raised this issue through questions in the House. Our health critic, France Gélinas, the member from Nickel Belt, has raised this issue.

I'm asking you again, if you're concerned about health care, and you're raising these two issues, please look at the private clinic model and ensure that we have oversight so we don't see another tragedy, another scandal, unfold and thousands of lives impacted again.

Indeed, if you're serious about proactive steps, include the Ombudsman in health care sector oversight, and he will ensure that there is an independent watchdog to make sure we have the strongest health care system.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd just like to respond to some of the comments that were being made. This bill, Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, is, I think, an extremely important bill. As mentioned earlier, it takes action to protect voluntary blood donations, and I cannot overemphasize just how important this is to the protection of our blood supply.

Ontario is taking action to protect the province's voluntary blood and plasma donation system. If this act is passed, we're going to do it in a number of ways.

The new legislation would prohibit payments to individuals for their blood and plasma. It would strengthen the government's enforcement powers in the case of violations, and it would expand the criteria considered for licensing blood collection facilities, making sure that we have the regulatory amendments in place also that prohibit any licensed lab or specimen collection centre from paying for blood and plasma donations, including reimbursement of expenses.

So we are taking a number of steps to ensure that our blood supply is safe, and we are trying to make sure that this blood supply is safe for all Ontarians, all Ontarians who are ill, and also that there are things in place for the future.

Encouraging people to give blood, as one of the members mentioned earlier, I think is a great idea. I think that we cannot do that enough and we should continue to do that.

The second part or schedule 2 of this bill focuses on the regulation of hospital pharmacies, and this is in response to Dr. Jake Thiessen's review of Ontario's cancer drug supply. What it suggests is making changes to strengthen the elements of the health professional regulatory system. He took a look at everything that was there and made some recommendations, and we're moving forward on these recommendations.

I think that ultimately, in the end, those are the steps we need to take, and this bill is a way of taking those

steps. I hope it will have the support it needs in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. Ted Arnott: The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton gave a fine speech this afternoon and I was quite interested in what he had to say with respect to Bill 21. I do want to compliment him; I thought it was very interesting.

Of course, as we know, this bill creates the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, as well as making amendments respecting “the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.”

It is, I would agree, an important piece of health care legislation, but I also believe that this bill would likely be improved after thorough consultations through a standing committee of the Legislature.

What I would recommend and would hope to see happen is that this bill would be referred to a standing committee of the House and that there would be extensive public hearings for interest groups that have an expertise in this issue as well as a concern, perhaps, who might want to strengthen the bill with suggestions for amendments. That process is something that in the past has been routine from time to time, and in other eras there have been times when governments have chosen not to take that route on important pieces of legislation, thinking that they know best, that they can get it right the first time.

As we’ve learned, sometimes through very hard experience, it usually is the appropriate course of action to take the time to get it right, to refer the bill to committee, and sometimes to have committees that travel around the province to get input from all corners of the province, not expecting all the groups and individuals to come to Toronto, but going to their communities to listen and hear what people have to say.

I would ask the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton: Would he agree that this bill would be strengthened through extensive public hearings and would he support that? That is my comment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This is one of the most important bills, I think, that could come forward, because of not just one tragedy, but two.

We’ve got the blood donation piece where back in the 1980s we had a tragic event happen where there was blood given to people and it was not the kind of blood that they could use to get healthy. It did more detriment to them. That’s a tragedy that we should be very ashamed of as a province, as a health leader in Canada.

Then the other tragedy was the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. Again, that put people at risk.

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Here we are, in two instances, and we talked about how this government doesn’t have the right oversight in many areas. We’re talking about two very serious health concerns that put people’s lives at risk.

One of the ones I want to focus on is the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs, because when that came to light in this Legislature, there was a whole committee process. Dr. Thiessen came and reported on it. Our health critic, France Gélinas, sat there diligently, listening to these recommendations. Out of the 12 recommendations that Dr. Thiessen recommended—people should listen on the other side; the government should listen on the other side—one of those recommendations was taken into effect in this bill. How can you justify not listening to the expert in oversight when it comes to the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs, when people were compromised? Their health was compromised.

I really think this government needs to reassess, and hopefully, when we get to committee, to look at these recommendations a little further from an expert—on Dr. Thiessen’s suggestions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I think, Mr. Speaker, that the critical thing is that in Ontario and in Canada, we have a very important part of our health care system, and that is the blood supply system, the voluntary system that we have here in Canada. We’re trying to do the best we can in this bill to ensure that its integrity is protected.

This is the second time this bill has been introduced. I know back in March last year, even the Conservative critic said that we should pass this bill quickly and get to it. We need to act and we need to act in a very deliberate way. We’ve all done our investigation with our experts here in the province of Ontario, in our health care system.

Also, it is important to note that these types of bills are important to introduce from time to time because many Ontarians take for granted the fact that we have over thirteen and a half million people who go through our health care system from time to time. Incredible work is being done by all partners in our health care system, from people who work in the labs, from our doctors, our nurses, our orderlies in hospitals, our pharmacists, our technicians, our researchers. I ask people, if you want to see the health care system and what pressures are on it, go down to St. Michael’s Hospital. Go right now and see what’s coming through the doors. Do you want to see the reality of health care?

There’s a certain reality in this House, and then there’s a reality down at St. Michael’s Hospital’s emergency room. This is why we have to pass bills like this, so that those professionals who are under the gun 24 hours a day are protected in their work through this kind of legislation, and ensure that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much.

Now we’ll go back to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. You have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to thank all the members for their input. Thank you very much to the new member from Halton. I appreciate your thoughts and comments. Thank you so much, and welcome again to the assembly.

I want to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills. I actually agree wholeheartedly. In particular

areas—I can't imagine an exception to this—I think it's extremely important for us to draw from the expertise. We all come with our own experiences, and some of us come with a wide range of expertise in different fields. But at the end of the day, when it comes to particular technical bills, we need to solicit the expertise of those folks who are leading in that field. In this case, with health care, we need to make sure that we have the input of those people who are leaders in this field. I certainly agree with the extensive public hearings. Whether it's expertise-based—I think it's also important for everyday citizens to have their voices be heard if they choose to voice their concerns. I think it's important to always have good public hearings and to have the input.

I also want to thank my seatmate and member from London—Fanshawe. I absolutely agree with her in terms of the importance of oversight and making sure that we work and implement the recommendations that come forward. We've seen so many reports that are tabled and then get shelved and collect dust, as we say. If we have suggestions and input and recommendations from people who are leaders, who are experts, who are masters in their particular field, we need to make sure that those recommendations are actually implemented.

I also want to thank the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for his thoughts and comments as well. Again, I want to just reiterate: If you want to take oversight seriously, there are some steps in front of you: Expand the mandate of the Ontario Ombudsman, and ensure that that takes into account the health care sector—and also address the clinics that we are seeing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I was waiting for the government side, if anyone would like to speak to the bill today, but I guess not.

This is Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. It is quite hard to follow my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound on his hour leadoff on this bill—lots of information on this bill. The subsequent speakers who have spoken have added to the debate.

Basically, the bill is a couple of bills from the past rolled into one. When you've heard the debate previously about wanting it to go to committees, it is complex. I'm a nurse, and I can't tell you all the exact needs—the plasma and the plasma protein therapies part of the bill. That's why I think we want to have extensive committee hearings: to make sure that we get it right because that's probably one of the very controversial parts of the act, and the amendments to the Voluntary Blood Donations Act.

There's also the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act—which it affects—the Health System Improvements Act, Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act, Public Hospitals Act, Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act. When you're affecting that many acts, you want to get it right, to make sure we know what we're talking about.

The schedule that I'll speak about that is affected, and I'll probably spend most of my time speaking about that, is the plasma and the plasma protein therapies. Just for a refresher, if anybody has tuned in, we call plasma “liquid gold.” It's that yellow-coloured liquid that makes up about 55% of the total blood volume. It can be obtained either through regular whole blood donation or through a process called plasmapheresis, where blood is collected from a donor and then the plasma portion of the blood is separated out, and the red blood cells and formed elements from the blood are returned to the donor. That's kind of why it's liquid gold, because it's so essential. Boy, when you're in trouble in the hospital and you need plasma, you need it now. It is usually used for patients who are bleeding severely and they need it to help clot that blood.

My colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound spoke about the shock that he was in around how many blood transfusions and how much plasma are involved in people who come in from car accidents. Sometimes they replace their body fluids seven times over until they get them stabilized, hopefully, and they survive such emergencies and tragedies.

Plasma can also be used to manufacture plasma protein products. One of these products is known as IVIG, which shows early promise of success for treatment of Alzheimer's. I wanted to read some of the plasma protein therapies and the diseases they treat.

Albumin, which is more the clear liquid that you'll see—I could be a little dated from my nursing days—and it usually came in a bottle. It's for shocks, burns, adult respiratory distress syndrome, cardiopulmonary bypass surgery, so after bypass. Albumin can be used for that; I've given it many times myself to patients while I was nursing.

IVIG, which I just mentioned, is an immunoglobulin. It's primarily for immunodeficiency diseases, autoimmune diseases, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy and idiopathic thrombocytopenia. It's been a long time since I used words like that.

Alpha-1 antitrypsin is used to treat genetic COPD, and then the coagulation factors from that are used to treat hemophilia A and B, von Willebrand disease and bleeding disorders. So that's just the plasma protein therapies and diseases that they do treat.

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If you're a patient who has to receive for a chronic disorder many of these transfusions—for one patient, for one year, with primary immunodeficiency disease, 130 donations are needed; with the alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, 943 donations are needed; and for hemophilia A, 1,237 donations are needed.

I think you have to put that into perspective, and I say that because a portion of the bill is about compensating for donations—so, clearly, Ontario does not collect enough plasma to be completely self-sustaining. It collects enough plasma for transfusion but does not produce enough plasma protein products to be entirely self-sufficient. I know it might be a little dry, but when I list

all the treatments that it can be used for, you start to get the idea that there are a lot of people being treated. We currently—and this is the situation; you have to deal with reality—purchase approximately 70% of our plasma protein products from the United States, from paid and from unpaid donors. We just cannot collect enough here. That is one of the parts of the bill where I think you do have to hear a lot of feedback about how we deal with this in the real world.

In April 2013, Health Canada held a round table in Toronto on the whole issue of payment for the plasma. During that round table, the presentation by the Canadian Blood Services—and I will, if I could, read an excerpt from that—was from Graham Sher, CEO of the Canadian Blood Services at the time.

“Dr. Sher explained that the Canadian Blood Services currently purchases bulk pharmaceutical products from the US and Europe that are made from plasma,” like plasma protein such as albumin, “on behalf of provincial and territorial governments for use in Canadian hospitals. These products are made from several plasma sources, including volunteer donors in Canada and the US, and paid donors in the US. He emphasized that internationally, the use of paid plasma in creating plasma protein products has been a common practice within the pharmaceutical industry for decades, and that the majority of the world’s supply of plasma products comes from paid donors sourced by the plasma industry.”

Later on, Dr. Sher stated that “between 600,000 and 700,000 litres of plasma for fractionation”—which is a separation of the products—“per year would be required for Canada to become self-sufficient and meet today’s demand, and that collecting this amount of plasma with a volunteer model is not operationally or economically feasible.”

I know, as I said, it’s quite a bit of a controversy about paid and unpaid donors within the bill, but you have to look at the medical scene and the reality that exists here, and how are we going to get around that?

I don’t know if some of you remember the Krever Commission and the tainted blood scandal that occurred in the early 1980s, where 2,000 Canadians were infected with HIV by tainted blood products and as many as 30,000 more were infected with hep C—and I have several of those constituents in my riding. It is estimated that nearly 8,000 of those who received bad blood are expected to die as a result, and, unfortunately, I have had some of those cases within my riding also.

Now, as well as facing a blood shortage and weighing the pros and cons, Health Canada and the Canadian Red Cross turned to the international market to purchase blood products for Canadians during that time. Some of those products were purchased from blood brokers whose supplies came from high-risk populations. Remember that the 1980s was the height of the AIDS epidemic in North America, and this imported blood was being inadequately screened before entering our system. So it was certainly a period of time—we don’t have that at the moment. The screening is far, far better, made better by a lot of recommendations from the Krever inquiry.

It says that after months of hearings and four years of investigations, Justice Krever released his landmark report—1,200 pages. Don’t worry; I’m not going to read all 1,200 pages here. That was in 1997. It took a long time.

They fundamentally found that the relationship between the Red Cross and the federal and provincial governments was dysfunctional and that Canada lacked a cohesive national blood policy. He outlined some basic principles of the Canadian blood supply system that I’ll read:

Blood is a public resource.

Donors of blood and plasma should not be paid for their donations, except in rare circumstances.

Whole blood, plasma and platelets must be collected in sufficient quantities in Canada to meet domestic needs for blood components and blood products.

Canadians should have free and universal access to blood components and blood products.

Safety of the blood supply is paramount.

Certainly, those are all fundamental good ideas that were brought forward in recommendations. He basically said that profits should not be made from the blood system. We know that supply and demand, life and death is the balance here. Safety is paramount. We do have a lot more safety nets, a lot more filtering in order to make sure that blood products are certainly safe for everyone to use. Canadian hospitals buy the bulk of their pharmaceutical products from the US and Europe, like I said. This is not new. It’s been common practice for decades. I know some of the controversy is about a company that’s going to collect, for payment, some blood products within Canada. We have to be very careful in balancing the proper rules and regulations with the need that our health care system finds itself in.

I know that there are some associations—for sure, several patient groups are concerned about the impact of the bill, and they’ve written to us to make sure that they are kept apprised of when this bill will have its hearings. They include the Canadian Immunodeficiencies Patient Organization, the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders, the Canadian Hemophilia Society and Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency Canada Inc. That is why we say the bill has got some complex ethical issues, but it also has some realities of the health care system, so we have to balance those out.

There’s another section of the bill, and it’s an amendment respecting the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions. I think we all value our pharmacists that are in all of our ridings. I certainly know, in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, the pharmacists are the front-line health care providers. More people have access to them, and therefore they are seen by many people who need, for sometimes just minor ailments, a little bit of guidance. They were here—for the last couple of weeks, I think, the pharmacists were here. They are asking about their scope of practice being increased, which I fully agree with. I think they’re under-utilized in their profession and they

could help take the burden off our health care system immensely by treating minor ailments. They are a fountain of knowledge; I think that we all know that. But the Bill 21 that we're speaking about today redefines hospital and community pharmacies to all be considered as one type of pharmacy in terms of inspection—so, again, making sure we have the right regulations to safeguard our citizens in health care when they need to receive these health care medications.

The Public Hospitals Act is also going to be impacted, in providing greater reporting to the College of Physicians and Surgeons when a physician leaves through misconduct. This allows for greater transparency in government. It makes physicians more accountable.

So, as you say, from time to time, bills need to be looked at. We're not opposed to that, and I think that those are things that make absolute sense in this bill.

It also allows cabinet to appoint a supervisor to a health profession college when necessary. I think that's very fair.

When the government wants to bring these bills in—and as I said, this has been a couple of bills folded into one. We're just not talking that it's easily debated. We said that, in general, we'd like to get this to committee and have full committee hearings.

I see that the time is almost done. I see the Speaker rising—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until Monday, November 17 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Monday 17 November 2014

Lundi 17 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 novembre 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Wendy Eaton, the mother of Nicole Eaton, who is the page captain today at Queen's Park.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to introduce Mansoor Lakhani and his wife, Salima Lakhani. They are the parents of Moiz Lakhani, who is the first page from Ottawa South since I've gotten to this Legislature. Welcome to them.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to welcome our friends from the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance and the Chicken Farmers of Ontario to the House today.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to welcome student leaders from the U of T Students' Union and the U of T Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students. They are here somewhere.

Hon. Jeff Leal: We've already welcomed the chicken farmers here today, but I'd also like to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park today: Don Taylor, from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers; Gerard Schouwenaar, from Flowers Canada (Ontario); and Jan VanderHout, president of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance. They have a reception at lunchtime today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With us today in the west gallery we have a very learned group, representatives of the Canadian Federation of University Women. We're glad you're joining us today, and be kind to us. Welcome.

We've got time for another introduction, if there is one.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It took a while, Speaker, but I found somebody I know. I see Paul Kossta all the way up there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: For a second time, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Henry Zantingh, from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario; and Michael Burrows, from the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors; as well as some of the board of directors, who are on both sides, east and west, of the members' gallery.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the House today Wendy Marshall, who operates a daycare called Pumpkin Patch. She's co-

president of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to take a moment to thank all members for their province-wide attendance at our remembrance week activities. I think it's fair to announce that all of us shared the same concerns that we all have in the province of Ontario. I want to bring credit to all the members in the House for their constant vigilance in our communities across the province to always remember our veterans: yesterday's veterans and today's veterans. So congratulations to all members, and thank you for your participation.

The member for Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Social Policy's consideration of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will deal with the first motion, which is to put a motion without notice. Do we have permission to put a motion without notice on the floor?

I heard a no.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After that no, you can see why I moved myself down the row.

My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. Today, your government will release its fall economic statement. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said that "Ontarians should be very concerned" about the direction in which the province is heading.

1040

Your inability to take urgent action is costing hard-working Ontarians over \$11 billion in interest annually to pay for Liberal waste and mismanagement. That's taxpayers' money that could be invested in front-line health care, first-rate education, reliable roads and transit.

The interim report by Ed Clark is proof your government will not make the tough decisions to reduce spending to balance the books, because you directed him to

tinker around the edges. Premier, will you admit that today's fall economic statement will do nothing to tackle the urgency raised by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let me say that it is always a pleasure and a privilege to work with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I know that the summit that was held just a number of days ago was very, very productive. They, in their report, which I believe is called *Emerging Stronger*—which actually reflects what is going on in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, having come out of the economic downturn and still recovering, but strength is exactly the direction that we're going in. The fact that over 550,000 jobs have been created in Ontario since the 2009 recessionary low, the fact that the unemployment rate is at 6.5%, the lowest unemployment rate since October 2008—those are indicators of just how this province is emerging stronger than ever, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, Premier, we remember the Drummond report, and we're seeing it again in Ed Clark's interim report. You cannot balance the budget on the backs of beer drinkers.

Today's fall economic statement will confirm what Drummond and Clark have already told us: that the Liberal government will not make those tough decisions. They will not rein in spending. They will continue to dig Ontario deeper in an economic hole despite how many reports you end up commissioning. Commuters, students and seniors will suffer because of this government's reckless mismanagement.

Premier, will you finally come clean to Ontarians in your fall economic statement and admit that you have no hope to balance the budget by 2017-18?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just answer the statement in his question about the reports that we have asked for.

The Drummond report: Over 80% of the recommendations that Don Drummond put forward, we have acted upon. There is chapter and verse on that, and the member opposite knows that. He knows full well that that information was available in our budget, and he can access it any time.

In terms of the recommendations that have been put forward in the interim report by Ed Clark and his panel, we ran on the reality and the expectation that we would be maximizing our assets, maximizing the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. The commission has given us advice, and we are going to follow through on that. He will see that in our fall economic statement, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: Back again to the Premier: Ontario's projected \$12.5-billion deficit this year is larger than every other province and the federal government combined. There is really nothing complicated about deficits and the debt. They're simply deferred taxes that will have to be paid for by future generations and inevit-

able cuts to public services. Paying off Ontario's debt alone, without reducing the annual debt by one penny, costs provincial taxpayers almost \$11 billion annually, more than the province pays for any other public service aside from front-line health care and education.

Premier, will your fall economic statement truthfully tell Ontarians that because of your out-of-control spending we will continue to waste billions of dollars on debt interest payments, and will you finally admit you have no plan to balance the books?

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The President of the Treasury Board beside me is asking for one idea from the opposite side in terms of how we could continue to emerge—an idea apart from cutting 100,000 jobs, because that actually is an idea that would hold us back.

So let's look at the facts. Ontario's unemployment rate is 6.5%, the lowest unemployment rate since October 2008. October's net job numbers: up 37,000 jobs in Ontario in October. Over 90% of those are full-time, Mr. Speaker. Ontario continues to be first in North America for foreign direct investment.

The reality is that we are emerging stronger. The member opposite says that's a simple thing. It's actually not. There are many fronts on which we have to operate. One is working with the private sector to make sure that jobs are created; another is investing in infrastructure, and that is the work we are doing right now.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, for the past month, we've asked you and your government to provide a business case for MaRS phase 2. For the past month, you've never once acknowledged that a business case exists. On Thursday, your government released 700 pages of documents that we requested a month ago, yet, once again, no business case. But now it's crystal clear: You told the media you believe you did release a business case.

Minister, that's not a business case and it's not due diligence. A building appraisal is not a market study, nor is it a feasibility study. Why was a business case never done by either MaRS or the ministry to determine what the rental market was for a research space in Toronto?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I was pleased, last week, that we were able to release over 700 pages of documentation that showed an incredible amount of due diligence done by Infrastructure Ontario with regard to the loan the member's referring to.

I think what Ontario taxpayers want to know is, what did the PCs feel about the idea—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —to ensure that MaRS phase 2 did not rot in the ground. That's why we put that loan forward.

What the member also needs to recognize—because I haven't heard him say this—is that this loan is fully

secured and will be fully repaid. So when the member suggests, wrongly, that somehow taxpayer dollars have been spent on this with regard to this loan, he's absolutely wrong.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, we shouldn't be surprised that you can't tell the difference between an appraisal and a business case. You couldn't tell the difference between a gas plant and a ballot box. You couldn't tell the difference between a franking sticker and a postage stamp.

What amazes me, Minister, is how you still have a job in this Liberal cabinet. You have quite the knack for having other people resign for your mistakes. I hope you're planning on sending a Christmas card to your former colleague from London West, as well as your former staffer.

Minister, will you provide the estimates committee with any market study that either MaRS or IO undertook prior to your signing off on the \$235-million loan, or will you finally admit one was never done?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member's the critic. I understand that the opposition's role is to critique government policies. They are entitled to their opinions. They're not entitled to their facts, and the facts are the facts. The fact is, the loan to MaRS is 100% fully secured. The other fact is that if his party were in office, they would have let that building rot in the ground. Some 51,000 jobs exist in the bioscience cluster. We're going to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, every document requested has been released to the public through the media and to the committee. That's being open and transparent. What those documents do is, they confirm what we've been saying all along: The investment is fully secured and it's a loan that will be repaid. The taxpayers' investment is protected. We'll continue to invest in building a strong bioscience cluster in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, I think we should all be concerned with your competency as a minister of the crown. Not only do you not know what an actual business case looks like, you also weren't clear on how far you would go to bail out MaRS. You boasted to the media that you were only prepared to pay \$7.1 million in interest. You were only partially accurate. You neglected to mention that you were legally obliged to pay \$7.1 million for the next 15 years, for a total of \$106.5 million. We know you can't tell the difference between \$40 million and \$1 billion, but I thought you might have taken a math class in your time at MTCU.

Minister, can you tell the difference between \$7.1 million and \$106.5 million, or the difference between one year and 15 years?

1050

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, seriously? That member wants us to take math lessons from the PC Party?

Do you remember last June? It wasn't that long ago. Too bad you weren't in charge of your party's platform. Maybe the math would have been correct, because you sound like such a brilliant mathematician.

But Mr. Speaker, if the member is such a brilliant mathematician, he would know and he would listen to the fact that we've been open and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is last time I provide anyone with an opportunity not to be mentioned by riding.

Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I said earlier on that the member is entitled to his opinion, and he's entitled to his rhetoric as well, but right now, that's the only thing coming out of his mouth: blind rhetoric. The fact of the matter is, he can fabricate the facts all he wants. The facts are the facts. The loan is fully secured and will be 100% repaid—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: To the Premier: Since 2002, privatizing energy generation has driven up hydro bills by more than 300%. The PCs started this job. You seem intent on finishing the job.

Now the Premier is planning to privatize energy distribution. How much will Ontarians see their bills go up when the Premier privatizes hydro distribution?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just begin by saying that we made it very, very clear in our budget, then when ran in June, on our platform, and then again when we reintroduced our budget that we were going to do a review of the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and that we were going to make sure that we were maximizing their benefit to the people of Ontario because in 2014 and going forward, we need to make investments in infrastructure, like transit—like transit to Kitchener–Waterloo—and like investments in roads and bridges around the province. We need to make those investments. In order to do that, we need to make sure that all of the assets owned by the people of Ontario are performing at their very highest capacity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Premier, Ed Clark says that there are tax barriers to privatizing Hydro One's distribution network and our local hydro utilities—that's his language. So the Liberals are going to get rid of those tax barriers. How much will these tax changes cost the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just go back to the issue around the assets, because I think it's very, very important that we understand that what Mr. Clark and his colleagues are talking about is working with the distribution part of the province, which is not as efficient as it could be, which does not function in a way that actually maximizes the benefit to the people of the province. In fact, there is the potential that there would be a reduction or at least a slowing down of the increase of rates, not an

increase. If the member opposite reads the report that was put out last week, she will see that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I did read the report. On page 9 of Ed Clark's privatization report, he writes, "OPG's portfolio includes assets—specifically its hydroelectric generating stations other than the large hydroelectric stations at Niagara Falls and on the St. Lawrence River—that could be sold to finance additional investments in provincial infrastructure. There is an active market for such assets."

Will the Premier rule out selling OPG's hydro dams, and will you do it today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, I would like to ask the member opposite her opinion on the nine private power-generating plant agreements that the NDP put in place when they were in office, because at that time, the NDP obviously believed that it was possible to work with the private sector and that it was in the best interests of the people of the province to work together and to not hold on to an ideology that says that government and private sector should not work together. I don't adhere to that ideology. Apparently, the NDP in the past had the ability to work co-operatively with the private sector. Apparently, that's been lost, certainly in this member's mind.

What we believe is that making sure that the assets that are owned by the people of this province work to their best capacity and to the best advantage of the people of the province so that we can make the investments that are needed now—that's what we believe needs to happen.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know, it's not ideology when you follow the numbers, because the numbers don't lie. The numbers are accurate.

Again to the Premier: Today, Ontarians will see the fall economic statement. Will it tell Ontarians how much their hydro bills are going to go up after the Premier privatizes Hydro One distribution lines, privatizing local hydro utilities and perhaps—she didn't rule it out—privatizing OPG hydro dams? Will you tell them how much it's going to cost?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I would say to the member that the government and the Premier have made it very, very clear to the asset committee that if there is any increase in price that comes from any of what is being contemplated now, we will not be going forward with it.

Additionally, I want to say that you effectively voted against a budget that had two significant mitigation prices for the people of the province of Ontario: (1) the elimination of the debt retirement charge and (2) the Ontario Energy Board is in the process now, under our budget, of creating a program for low- and middle-income people to mitigate the rates that they have. You and your

party voted against that. You campaigned against it. Shame on you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: We voted against an austerity budget with 6% cuts in many ministries across this province. That's what we voted against. And we wouldn't need mitigation terms if—the cost of hydro keeps going up and up and up, and people can't afford it.

Really, what is happening here is that the Premier doesn't know how much her plan is going to cost rate-payers. She doesn't know that, nor does the Minister of Energy. She doesn't know how much her tax changes will cost the province's bank account. Why is the Premier moving ahead with privatizing assets when she doesn't know what her plans will mean for the people of this province?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I appreciate the member's concern about electricity prices. We have done a significant number of things to mitigate future increases, including the NUGs, non-utility generators, which are 20-year-old power purchase contracts which other governments put in place. They're coming up for renewal, and the OPA is negotiating a lower price in order to suppress the pressure on prices. One of the members from the New Democratic Party is encouraging us to pay more for private purchase of that power on a renewal contract, so they are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

I don't have the time to go into many of the other price mitigation measures that we have put in place, but they are significant. It's a priority for us, and it's working.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Perhaps the problem is that the Liberal government doesn't really understand what privatization is, they've used so many words to describe it: "P3s," "alternative finance"—

Interjection: "Modernizing."

Ms. Catherine Fife: "Modernizing." Maybe that is the problem. For over a decade, the Liberal government has shown a sense of entitlement and arrogance when it comes to a government that belongs to the people of this province. They thought they knew best with eHealth and Ornge and gas plants, and now they're saying that they know best about the public assets that are owned by Ontarians.

The Premier said that she would be different, so why do we see the exact same Liberal arrogance here in this House today?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In our procurement for our power, we have programs in place which are very, very egalitarian, if I can put it that way, and which also help to suppress prices.

Among those are our programs for First Nations. We have had more First Nations participate in our power purchasing process than ever in the history of this province. We have in our renewable process incentives for aboriginal communities to get involved. We have loan programs for aboriginal communities.

We have many things in all of our processing of our electricity contracts that help people in this province, and

many of them are used to suppress pressures on prices. We're very proud of that record.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, your Bill 10 hearings begin today and will be quickly finished by tomorrow evening. Groups such as the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools, Ontario First Nations daycare associations and francophone daycare associations have been left completely out of the hearings. These groups represent tens of thousands of daycare spaces across our province.

1100

Minister, we have repeatedly asked for travel and extensive consultation on this very, very important bill. We absolutely have to get this bill right, and yet you have time-allocated and moved this bill through very, very quickly.

Can you explain to the House what the rush is to push this bill through this House without the input from many key stakeholder groups?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would be delighted to talk about the timing on this bill. The bill was first tabled over a year ago, and we've been talking to people both before and after that. So we've been talking to people for a couple of years about this bill—over 400 written submissions before we even drafted the bill, and tons of correspondence and discussions.

In fact, after we tabled the bill a year ago, we met with ADCO, the Association of Day Care Operators, and some of the feedback that we received when we tabled the bill the first time is actually incorporated into Bill 10 in its current version.

In fact, I even went to Ottawa—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary, the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question goes back to the Minister of Education.

It was a bit rich, on the weekend, for the Premier to chastise federal leaders about daycare when it is her government shutting down debate on child care in the province of Ontario.

Today, the Association of Day Care Operators said that they were excluded from child care hearings. They represent over 200,000 mothers and fathers.

We know, for example, that, in the hearings that we're going to see over the next two days, Montessoris, independent religious schools, Jewish day schools and native and francophone child care operators are also being excluded.

I want to talk about Sarah-Jane, a child care operator from Lanark county, who found it so expensive to travel here to Queen's Park that her friends had to do crowd-source funding for her to come to her provincial capital to speak to Ontario legislators. Her friend Sandra Niblock asks, "Five dollars a person adds up. Think of the money you could be earning as she speaks for us."

Does the minister think open government means closed government when it comes to public—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'd like to remind the member: When I stand, you sit, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, you must. Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let's talk about travelling. As I said, on Friday I had the opportunity to travel to Ottawa and to speak with the leadership of both the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers and the providers resource network. Actually, included in that group was one of the leaders from Lanark county. So I went to hear them. I think we had a very productive conversation. We don't agree on all the issues, but I think we did find some areas of agreement where we can work together and make the bill work.

I think it's really important to understand that after we pass the bill—and I obviously hope the bill will pass—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Same reminder: I stand; you sit.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The government wrote MaRS a bailout cheque worth at least \$300 million. They wrote a US real estate speculator a \$65-million cheque for a building that was never more than a third full. But they won't release the business case for the loan they made to MaRS.

To be clear: The documents released last week were not the business case.

At this rate, we'll find life on the planet Mars before we get the business case for the building from MaRS.

Why won't the government release the business case? Is there something that you're hiding?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: To directly respond to the member's final question, absolutely not. We've released over 700 pages of documents. Exactly what was asked for was exactly what was released. Within those documents is all kinds of information regarding the due diligence that's gone into this loan that IO conducts, frankly, in all of their consideration of loans—over 700 pages of documents that include all of that information.

I know it's a lot of documents and I know that the members opposite may not have the time to go through them, but within those documents is confirmation of everything we've been saying all along. The loan is fully secured on a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

I'm going to ask the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke to come to order and the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington to come to order.

Mr. John Yakubski: Wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got it out. I got it out.

I also won't allow for you—the reminder: I do not like it when you name somebody other than with their riding or their title. I'm going to stick to that. It elevates the debate, and if you use it the other way, it lowers the debate, and I don't want it.

Please finish.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What those documents provide is confirmation of what we've been saying all along. The property is worth more than what we've invested into it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The taxpayers' investment is safe and secure—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Premier released a property assessment for MaRS that's based on 80% occupancy. The building is 30% full.

The Premier's government insists the deal was smart, but nobody seems to be able to find the business case. This Liberal government insists it's being honest, but the people of Ontario still have questions.

Six months after Ontarians learned about the scandal, why is the Liberal government still hiding the business case—not 700 documents, the business case—from Ontarians?

Hon. Brad Duguid: If the member had time to go through the 700 pages of documents we put out, he would not be referring to this issue in the way that he's referring to it.

It's pretty simple overall. It's a complex issue, but it's pretty simple. There was a building rotting in the ground at MaRS. Do the NDP now want to join the PCs in suggesting the government should have just let that building rot and put at risk the 51,000 jobs in our bioscience cluster? Mr. Speaker, that would not be our position.

We supported the idea to construct this building. Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, two experts, will soon be providing us advice about the path forward. I'm very confident that there's a positive path forward on this project that's going to be very successful in terms of protecting taxpayers' dollars.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

From knocking on doors in my riding of Cambridge during the spring election to receiving calls at my constituency office, the economy is top of mind for many of my constituents, including my 17- and 20-year-old sons

and their friends, who are now planning for their future and their entry into the job market.

I have reviewed Stats Canada's recent job numbers report and found a positive trend for my region of Waterloo that includes Cambridge. My region's unemployment rate dropped by 0.4% in the last month alone and 1.5% over the last year. Cambridge now has an unemployment rate of 6.3%, proof that our government's economic plan is working for my constituents in Cambridge.

Would the minister please inform the House about last month's job numbers and how our province has continued to grow since the global recession?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's certainly great news for the Cambridge community. It's really good to hear that.

Last month alone, Ontario created 37,000 net new jobs. Over 90% of those jobs were full-time jobs, which is great news. Our province's unemployment rate dropped 0.6% last month. It's now 6.5%. This is the lowest unemployment rate Ontario has seen since October 2008. Mr. Speaker, even the opposition has to consider that good news.

Since the recession, Ontario is up 550,000 net new jobs—in fact, more specifically, 551,300 net new jobs. In fact, our job recovery rate since the recession is 207.4%, well outpacing the US at 115%. That tells me we're doing something right in the province of Ontario.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: This is great news, not only for my Cambridge community but for the entire province.

Ontario's manufacturing sector is important to the overall strength of our economy. I know that the opposition enjoys talking this sector down, but I think it's important to talk about the facts.

Last month alone, Ontario's manufacturing sector gained 32,900 net new jobs. Recently, I spoke at a manufacturing summit in Cambridge hosted by Professional Engineers Ontario. They're excited by the growth of the advanced manufacturing sector in Cambridge.

Today, in my community, auto manufacturing is incredibly important. Toyota's Cambridge facility, our largest employer, is home to the only Lexus plant outside of Japan.

Would the minister please update the House on the strategic investment partnerships this government has recently secured to keep Ontario's auto sector on track?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Last week, following the Premier's successful mission to China, our Premier was pleased to announce that our government is investing with Honda to make the Alliston facility the global lead for the Honda Civic.

I've been advised that this is a first, globally. This will make Ontario the only jurisdiction outside of Japan to ever land a Honda global lead facility, something for us and the workers in Alliston to be very proud of. These investments will not only safeguard 4,000 high-skilled, direct positions, they will also support thousands more supply chain jobs throughout Ontario. The project will cover major investments in the assembly lines, engine plants and paint shops.

As Ontario continues to lead North America in foreign direct investment, our strategic efforts to partner with our auto sector will continue to provide value and attract investment and jobs to our province.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, how many violations of provincial truck testing standards did Serco report at the DriveTest centre in Woodbridge this year?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for that question. This is a very timely question because the member will know that not that many days ago I had the opportunity to announce via the media that our government would be moving forward for the first time—for the first time amongst all the provinces across this country—with mandatory, entry-level training for truck drivers who are seeking to obtain their AZ licence.

This is a measure where, once fully rolled out, of course, I'll have the chance to work closely with my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on this particular matter. As I said a second ago, it will place Ontario at the forefront of dealing with making sure that truck drivers out there are properly trained.

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the convention of the Ontario Trucking Association, and they were thrilled to know that our government plans to move forward with this measure. I look forward to discussing this more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll remind folks that I did ask about violations at the provincial truck testing standards facility in Woodbridge, because we know, through the Toronto Star report, that would-be truckers were not even being taken on 400-series highways—a clear violation of your ministry's standards.

Serco's contract allows them to self-audit and self-report compliance with ministry standards, giving them Ornge-like powers that are jeopardizing our safety. Minister, you have a clear responsibility for oversight and yet you allow a contract for self-policing of our testing centres that diverts accountability.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, will you, today, table the reports and audits of detailed DriveTest centre violations since this self-policing regime went into effect?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's interesting, I also had the opportunity to read some of the media stories that the member opposite is talking about. The self-auditing aspect of what this particular contractor is able to provide deals with a variety of issues, including items like customer satisfaction. When it was first brought to the ministry's attention, via the media, that there was a problem or a concern being expressed around this particular test centre, Ministry of Transportation officials were able to go out to the test centre itself to make sure that all the rules and regulations were being followed.

In fact, as it relates to the extent to which these test centres are performing their responsibilities in the man-

ner that they are supposed to, the Minister of Transportation does, of course, send out folks to audit, on average, on a monthly basis.

It's important, as I said in responding to the first question, that we move forward with the mandatory training for AZ drivers who want to become truck drivers here in this province. Hopefully, the member opposite will support those measures.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Joe Cimino: Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Transportation, I'll keep the same line of questioning.

Last month, we learned that the provincial government allows unregulated licence mills to train drivers of 40-tonne tractor-trailers. Then we learned that Serco, the private multinational corporation that runs DriveTest centres, does not always test these drivers on highways. At that time, the Minister of Transportation assured us "there are specific standards and requirements for commercial driver testing that our service provider must meet."

Well, today we learned that the government has no idea whether Serco is meeting these standards. That's because last year, the government gave Serco the power to police itself, leaving it up to Serco to verify its own performance and let the minister know whether they are not doing their job properly.

Will the minister explain why the government agreed to this gaping loophole when the contract was renewed last year?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In my answer to the previous question from the member of the opposition, the member from Kitchener, I spent a bit of time talking about what this particular contractor is in fact permitted to self-audit, which is at the crux of this question as well. Here is a list of some of the things that this particular contractor is entitled to self-audit: accuracy of transaction processing and timeliness of corrections, maintaining an 85% customer satisfaction rating at all locations, and response and resolution time to customer inquiries and complaints. The list goes on, Speaker.

What I'm trying to get at here, and what I tried to say in my response to the original question I received on this, is that the self-auditing mechanism doesn't occur with respect to the testing itself. The Ministry of Transportation works very hard with all of our testing centres to ensure that they are following the regulations and rules. When the story first appeared, we did take action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll respond more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Cimino: Speaker, through you: In 2003, the Harris Tories privatized driver licensing centres, signing a 10-year contract with Serco, which also runs private prisons and private hospitals. Contracting out has been a

disaster, leading to a long strike in 2009. But instead of cutting ties with Serco, as the NDP had demanded, last year the Liberal government signed up for another 10 years, and this time, the contract is even worse, with less accountability and protection for Ontario drivers—and the government refuses to say how many inspectors, if any, are overseeing Serco's operations.

Instead of outsourcing accountability to yet another public-private partnership, will the government publicly release the uncensored Serco contract, all audit reports and ministry reviews of DriveTest, and tell us the number of inspectors in charge of overseeing Serco's operations?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In one of my answers to a question already today, Speaker, I talked about the fact that on average, on a monthly basis, there are MTO inspectors who are out there at this particular test centre and across the province.

I think it is important here in this Legislature for us to deal with facts and information. It's really important to note that over the last few years, there were a number of measures that have been brought forward by our government to make sure that our roads here in Ontario remain amongst the safest in North America. For example, not that many years ago, this government took some steps to make changes to the commercial vehicle testing regime, including a training standard for class AZ drivers and for their licence training programs which was introduced back in 2010 by one of my predecessors in this portfolio. Here's the interesting part: Notwithstanding what the members of the opposition are trying to do here today, since that time, since those measures were introduced, we have seen in Ontario that the number of fatal collisions involving large trucks has reached a five-year low.

So instead of standing here in this House—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —and trying to create hysteria around this subject, let's deal with the facts and see—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Minister, despite a constantly changing economy, Ontario was able to rank high as one of the largest economies in the US and Canada last year, and we're first in North America when it comes to foreign-direct investment. We all know how crucial to our success it is that we promote our economic competitiveness on the international stage.

My riding of Halton is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, and our residents are concerned about our province's economic health. My constituents want Ontario to maintain its competitive business advantage and continue to create opportunities for economic growth.

Minister, as the global economy remains unstable, what is Ontario doing to ensure that we foster a climate that is conducive to business?

1120

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Halton for asking.

Speaker, three weeks ago, I was in China on a trade mission with the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Two delegations—one in clean tech, the other one in science and technology—accompanied us. We visited Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing in China. We were joined by Premiers from other provinces as well who share our belief that relationships must be in place in order for the doors to open for the business connections.

We secured three deals that will lead to almost \$1 billion in investments and 1,800 jobs for Ontarians.

Speaker, we're also pleased that our trade mission brought about tangible results so quickly. Driving our economy and creating jobs are our ultimate goals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, it is reassuring to hear that the trade mission to China brought about so many trade and investment partnerships. According to the Conference Board of Canada, every \$100-million increase in exports creates close to 1,000 new jobs for Ontarians. Given the success in China and the number of new partnerships you have brought to Ontario, I'm sure we can expect many new opportunities for the people of our province.

However, it is important to note how diverse Ontario is, not just in culture, but in our job force as well. In my riding, we have a lot of young families coming from a lot of different backgrounds with a lot of different skills. Many are looking to break into and establish themselves in the job market. Not all Ontarians work in the same sector. Not all Ontarians will find work in a steel mill.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister be able to tell us what is being done to ensure that Ontarians in different fields, like the residents in my riding, will benefit from the success of the China trip?

Hon. Michael Chan: We know how important it is to our economy that we must diversify. But diversification is not just about knocking on the doors of different countries. It's about exploring opportunities in many different fields and bringing various types of investment to Ontario.

This is what we did in China, Speaker. We secured partnerships, investments and jobs that will benefit different sectors and different communities. Here are some of the examples: We partnered with a company building a pair of residential towers, a company that will bring manufacturing jobs for green projects, a steel nail mill, a financial centre and more.

We will also formalize a new work plan for the Ontario-Jiangsu Business Council which will promote ties beyond the mission.

Speaker, we are committed to ensuring this trade mission does not create only temporary results. We have worked to bring about long-term, prosperous growth for Ontarians.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, we all join the people of London to mourn the life of Dave MacPherson. Mr. MacPherson was tragically killed in a fire that engulfed an unlicensed group home where he and some 30 other people, all suffering from mental illness and addictions, were forced to reside because your government has failed to provide an adequate number of properly licensed facilities.

But days before this fatal fire took place, a manager from your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee toured the building. How is it that ministry staff who toured this group home did not raise any concerns, even though the building was under strict city and fire department improvement orders?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me offer my most sincere condolences to the family and friends of the victim. This is a real tragic incident.

I want to remind members that the job of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee is to do for the client what he or she would do for themselves in financial matters; for example, receive income, apply for any available benefits, pay bills and file taxes. As the guardian of property, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee does not make personal decisions for the client, such as deciding where a client lives and what activities they engage in. It also does not recommend or refer clients to any type of housing. Community agencies usually perform this function.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, the place was appalling. There were no walls in the bedrooms. There were bugs in the bed and piles of garbage in the hallways. Who would want to live in that, and why would the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, which signs the cheque, turn a blind eye and walk away?

For more than a year, inspectors from several city departments had been monitoring this London apartment building. London police alone have visited the facility over 100 times in 2014. There are constant red flags, including health, safety, fire and zoning violations, but some of our most vulnerable Londoners were still living in these conditions.

Minister, your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee is responsible for protecting the rights and interests of Ontarians suffering from mental illness. This tragedy should have been prevented. What immediate and urgent action will you take to guarantee that this same tragedy does not take place in other Ontario communities?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The role of the Public Guardian and Trustee is to look after the financial matters of those individuals. However, there are other agencies, like the municipality, for instance, that are responsible for looking into these facilities and seeing if the fire code is respected and if health and safety is respected.

But I'm sure that the Ministry of Community and Social Services, along with other agencies that look after

these types of individuals, will look into it, because it's very unfortunate, and I hope it does not happen again.

HOME CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. This Liberal government has a bad habit of saying one thing and doing another. For all their talk about making home care a priority, the Liberals are allowing home care services to be cut from Windsor to Sarnia.

The Erie St. Clair CCAC has reduced daily nursing visits by a shocking 33% this month. That's a huge hit that means seniors won't get the care they need. Many have been told they're now just a number on a wait-list, and family caregivers have been stripped of essential respite time.

Will the Premier explain how she can possibly stand by and allow vital home care services to be slashed in southwestern Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It simply isn't true that we're slashing our funding to home care or to our CCACs. In fact, we have dramatically increased the funding that we provide to home care and to community care services through our CCACs and through our LHINs since coming into office in 2003. In fact, it is a 99% increase in funding over, roughly, the past decade.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we do rely on our LHINs and our CCACs to make those important decisions in terms of the distribution of resources.

I'm happy to speak more about that in the supplementary coming up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The minister can talk about home care until he's blue in the face, but the only thing that matters is whether he's willing to stop these cutbacks that are happening on his watch.

A 33% reduction in home care nursing visits is not acceptable. My office has been flooded by worried families who have no idea where they're going to turn to get the care their loved ones need. They're scrambling to deal with these cuts and the government's broken promise to deliver better home care.

Premier, you stated that you would not forget about Windsor, but this is not the type of attention we were hoping for. Will the Premier commit today to doing whatever it takes to reverse each and every cut to the seniors of southwestern Ontario who depend on vital home care services?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, again, we are investing more than \$4 billion in home care, including investing significant portions of that amount in the Windsor-Essex area. We are not making cuts to home care or to our community care services. In fact, we've increased it: this year alone, \$270 million extra into that important care.

It is true that we're using those funds to provide support for the more complex-needs patients. We're

making sure that those patients are no longer cared for in hospitals but are actually cared for in the place that is more relevant to them to give the highest quality of care, to provide them with the supports that they need. Those complex-needs patients who perhaps used to be cared for in hospitals are now being cared for in home and closer to home. It's working, and we're increasing funding to accommodate those needs.

1130

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Fraser: Two Fridays ago, we heard some great news for Ontario's economy. Our unemployment rate dropped to 6.5%, the lowest since October 2008, the peak of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I need to know who.

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Thanks to the member for Nepean—Carleton.

Mr. Speaker, 37,000 jobs were created in Ontario last month, most of them full-time, including 6,300 jobs for youth. It is vital to Ontario's economic future that youth have opportunities for employment, and it's apparent that our plan to grow the economy and create good jobs is working in every region of the province. However, we know that there's always more that can and needs to be done.

Could the Minister of Children and Youth Services give us an update on how the Ontario government is helping to create opportunities for youth employment in the province?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thanks to the member for Ottawa South for that question. It's a really important one because I think we can all agree that the future of Ontario is indeed tied to our youth, and it's important that we help young people reach their full potential in this province. We need to work collaboratively, not just in government but with the private sector, the broader public sector and so on.

When I'm meeting with groups outside of government, there's a real recognition that government can't address this issue alone. We must work collaboratively with the private sector, the broader public sector and beyond. Our work with CivicAction is an example of a project we've entered into to help at-risk youth overcome barriers to employment. CivicAction is leading a nine-month engagement review in the GTHA and the report, Escalator, will provide opportunities for employment, mentorship and so on. I'll speak more to it in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I appreciate the minister's answer. It's very interesting work that's being done with CivicAction to help at-risk youth with employment opportunities.

Bringing the private sector, labour, government and community groups together is a major undertaking, and the collaborative, consensus-building approach to this issue will lead the way to lasting and positive outcomes for youth who need these opportunities.

Though the Escalator report was only released in September, I'm hoping that the minister could give us some insight on what the response has been like.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I am very pleased to report that in November CivicAction and NPower Canada welcomed their first cohort into the Technology Service Corps Canada program. This is an employer-driven program for aspiring IT professionals. It gives free training, internships, job placements and mentorship for underserved youth in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It's a fantastic program. This is another example of important partnerships that our government is making with grassroots organizations in Ontario.

I should just mention, too, that CivicAction led a round table last Friday on youth employment with LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner. That's another example of important partnerships with the private sector.

We're committed to working with all our partners to help address the issues with youth employment.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On October 30, my colleague asked the minister about his government's incredible indifference towards two small municipalities hit by last year's ice storm. He claimed that municipalities that "suffered the most damage and have the least ability to respond fiscally" would "get helped as quickly as possible." If that's true, then why is he plastering those municipalities in red tape, forcing them to fill out even more paperwork a year after the disaster struck?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's an interesting question. It goes right to the heart of accountability. When you're distributing \$190 million in ice storm relief, you want to make sure you get it right. Municipalities have applied for assistance. They've been screened based on that application, and there's a process of documenting their receipts for ice storm repairs that's very, very necessary for any government that wants to be transparent and accountable. It's as simple as that. That's what we're doing. Municipalities have, in fact, asked—and AMO has asked—for an extension of the deadline with respect to filling out the forms so that more of those municipalities that you're talking about can come together, document their need, present their receipts, and get, hopefully, a response from the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Minister, the town of Minto and the municipality of North Perth, where officials are still filling out paperwork, will not be satisfied with that answer, and neither am I. They were hit very hard but have yet to see a nickel. I have consistently spoken up for the municipalities I represent, starting in April 2013. That's when the first storm hit and North Perth applied

for assistance. The government's response? Not so much as a gift card.

When the former minister promised \$190 million after the December ice storm, officials in Toronto confidently stated that "virtually all" of their costs would be covered. Why hasn't the government given Minto, North Perth and other small and rural municipalities the same assurances, or does the minister actually think that Toronto is less able "to respond fiscally"?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I think it's wonderful that the member opposite continues to be an advocate for his community; that's what he's here for—good for you.

Notwithstanding that, we want to make sure that any assistance that's provided is done based on need and is done in the responsible and accountable way that requires receipts to be presented for the work that's done. Municipalities know what the guidelines are, and in a number of instances have asked for extensions in order to assist.

By the way, there is some financial assistance available to municipalities who are having trouble with the paperwork.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Questions remain about the government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. We know that "comparable" plans will be exempt, but the government is still to define exactly what that means. Instead, they continue to prioritize their bank-friendly PRPP legislation.

Speaker, I have already asked this question and I didn't receive an answer, so I'm happy to ask it again: Will PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her question. As we know, retirement savings is an issue for us in this province. When we look out we know that people are not saving enough for their retirement futures. Our government has committed to strengthening our retirement income system, and that includes voluntary measures such as PRPPs, which are a complement to our made-in-Ontario solution of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Speaker, we have to take action now. Doing nothing is not a solution. We have to ensure that we strengthen Ontario's retirement savings system so that when people retire, they can retire in some comfort and dignity. That is our intention and that is our focus.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The government claims that it is committed to a public pension plan in Ontario but their actions say otherwise. They tell us that PRPPs will merely supplement the ORPP, but more and more it looks like they will become a substitute. Speaker, if the government is committed to a public pension plan, then we want to hear them make commitments, not just make noise.

So I'll ask again: Will PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan? Third time.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Let me be very clear. The focus of our government is the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, and that is what we're focused on doing. Other measures such as PRPPs and RRSPs are voluntary savings mechanisms, which are essential to people achieving their retirement goals overall. It's important for us to have strong retirement savings systems in this province so that we can continue to move forward and to contribute to Ontario's economy in the long term.

I thank the member opposite for her question. It's an important one, as we focus on building up retirement savings in this province.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Minister, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, there are many constituents who live very demanding lives, whether they're students, professionals or parents of young families. They want to know that they can shop safely for basic needs and enter into fair and accountable agreements without worrying about being taken advantage of by misleading sales tactics or confusing contracts. I think many of us have had experiences like that.

Ontarians believe that our province should maintain certain standards protecting their rights as consumers. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please update this House on what his ministry is doing to protect Ontario consumers?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the question from the member from Kitchener Centre. It's an important question. Since 2003, we've taken a significant number of measures to help protect consumers, including things like removing the expiry date on gift cards, capping payday lending costs, and capping fees on cellphone costs as well as allowing for triple recovery.

We're also very pleased with the recent passage of Bill 55, Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, which will help prevent aggressive, high-pressure door-to-door sales tactics as well as protect consumers with respect to water heater rentals, debt settlement and real estate practices.

We are moving as well to introduce changes to the Condominium Act. There has been a fairly lengthy consultation on that. We're going to have more to say about that in the future, as well as areas around home renovations, moving companies, home inspections and the development of a consumer protection bill of rights.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm delighted to introduce, from Crohn's and Colitis Canada, Aida Fernandes, Lisa Salapatek, C.K. DesGrosseilliers, Helen Silbiger, Natasha Mistry, and Andrew Holt and his mother, Martha Holt. Welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: In absentia, I would like to introduce Amanda Ironside, who is a teacher at East York Collegiate Institute. She was here with three members of her grade 10 civics class, and we were very civil for her being here.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome my predecessor, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who is here with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: My colleague introduced Mr. Phillips; thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So both of you are stepping on my job.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'll just add, Speaker: from Scarborough, a wonderful former member and colleague and a great adviser to us. Thank you for being here today.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to welcome to the House today a number of guests—and I'd ask all members to welcome them—from the Ukrainian Canadian community. We have with us Valentina Kuryliw, who is chair of the National Holodomor Education Committee, and a number of members of the committee: Nadia Makriy, Lydia Falcomer, Eugene Yakovitch, Lesa and Jaroslav Semcesen, Bob Onyschuk and Myroslava Oleksiuk. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes. Sorry, Mr. Speaker; I was remiss in not also recognizing Sarah Ker-Hornell, who is with Film Ontario. She's a constituent in Toronto-Danforth.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge my colleague MPP Yvan Baker's mother, who is joining us here today as well. Welcome, Mrs. Baker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Somebody is going to get in trouble for that one.

The member from Thornhill, an introduction.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I was expecting some students from Thornhill Public School today. I don't know if that's them up in the gallery, but hopefully they made it down today safely in this weather.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's get to the one that I always do. My friends and colleagues, with us today in the west members' gallery, from Scarborough—Agincourt in the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments, from parts unknown, Gerry Phillips.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK

Mrs. Gila Martow: On behalf of myself and the entire PC caucus, I am honoured to extend my warmest greetings to all those who participated in last week's 34th annual Holocaust Education Week in Toronto and all over the world. This was presented by the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre of UJA

Federation of Greater Toronto. I'm proud to be able to say that this year, Canada has assumed the position as the chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Holocaust Education Week offers extensive programming designed to engage Ontarians from all different types of heritages, with the opportunity to delve into one of the darkest moments in human history and emerge with universal lessons of hope, tolerance and human rights. I myself attended a couple of fantastic events, one at the Royal Ontario Museum to mark the launch of Holocaust Education Week and another a lecture at Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

Holocaust Education Week offers a powerful schedule of activities, including films, discussions and exhibits that encourage remembrance and denounce intolerance.

I want to take this opportunity to commend the dedication of the survivors, volunteers, staff and supporters from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre for their efforts to make this and every year's Holocaust Education Week such a success. Thank you for all the work that you do.

IRENE ATKINSON

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my absolute honour to stand today and to recognize a woman who truly is a force of nature in Parkdale-High Park and throughout the educational system. That's Irene Atkinson, our trustee, who is retiring after 40 years as a trustee, the longest-serving trustee in the Toronto District School Board ever, and, not only that, the only trustee who served on the Toronto Board of Education and on the TDSB as well.

She is known as the "mother of Sorauren." She actually saved Sorauren Park in our community as a place for families rather than a place for garbage trucks to park. She worked tirelessly and got extra funds for Parkdale public, Queen Victoria public, Swansea public, Keele public—I could go on and on—over the 40 years.

A true woman of conscience, she used to be a red Tory and left the Conservative Party after she saw what Mike Harris did to education in this province. She crossed the floor to us—we were the happy beneficiaries of that—and continued to serve the same folk.

Here's to Irene Atkinson. After 40 years, we hope she has a wonderful retirement. Of course, a woman like that never really retires. She's actually going on to work on the review board and other boards in the community. But we're going to miss her. I can tell you that a generation or two of education ministers are not going to miss her, because she kept on their heels.

Here's to Irene and all the women like her.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Last week, Ontarians all across our province paused for a minute of silence on November 11 to commemorate the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, when the guns of World War I fell silent

with the signing of the armistice between the Allied Nations and the Central Powers.

"The beginning of the end of war," wrote American veteran and author Herman Wouk, "lies in remembrance."

Our Royal Canadian Legion branch 139 Streetsville marched with veterans, elected officials, fire, police and emergency response, as well as our very active army, navy and air cadet corps. Queen Street in 2014 was lined with more people than anyone can ever recall attending a Remembrance Day ceremony.

This year's ceremony was the first Remembrance Day at the redeveloped Streetsville square, with its rebuilt cenotaph, and the last Remembrance Day for Hazel McCallion to preside as Mississauga's mayor. An estimated 3,500 people lined the streets and jammed the square to pay tribute to Canada's fallen soldiers and to remember not merely those who served in Canada's wars and peacekeeping, but also those who returned to build the great nation, province and communities that we have and enjoy today.

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CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, recently we celebrated the first annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, part of the Hawkins Gignac Act, which passed last year. I want to commend Ontario fire departments for their support and their efforts to raise awareness.

For example, the Perth East and West Perth fire departments made The Wake Up Call, a CO safety video that educates people on the dangers of carbon monoxide. In Peterborough, the fire department worked with First Alert and the Peterborough Petes to create an information display. In Barrie, the fire and emergency services knocked on doors and distributed printed materials describing the new CO laws in Ontario, and held a talk with John Gignac, the founder of the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education.

I also want to recognize the Insurance Bureau of Canada, which has donated over 2,000 carbon monoxide detectors. In recognition of CO Awareness Week, they made donations in London, Ottawa, Cornwall, and several Oxford fire departments. They also donated to Habitat for Humanity in Leeds and the Thousand Islands. These carbon monoxide detectors will play an important role in protecting Ontarians. You can't see, smell or taste carbon monoxide, so the only way to know your family is safe is to have a detector in your home.

I want to thank everyone who helped promote Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, including the members of all three parties. These efforts are making Ontario families safer and are a tribute to the Hawkins family. I want to thank each and every one of you.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Cindy Forster: Last Thursday, November 6, I had the opportunity to attend an event in my community

at the Welland community centre to protect our local hospital services in our communities. We hear about this issue day in and day out from small and rural communities across this province. It was attended by many, many people in my riding, and they all had the same concerns: cutting hospital beds; cutting CCAC services in our communities; wait-lists for mental health services; wait-lists for long-term-care beds; and giving our long-term-care beds to the private sector instead of to the non-profit sector—those dollars should be going to the care of individuals in our community.

Now, this coming Friday—and I would encourage all MPPs to attend this event—there's going to be a rally here at Queen's Park. It is sponsored by the Ontario Health Coalition and the Niagara Health Coalition and it's here at 12 p.m. on Friday. There are buses coming in from across the province, because everyone is concerned about the erosion of health care services in their communities.

In my own community, many hospitals have closed; another one is slated for closure. So, please, attend this rally and show your support to keep our hospitals open.

REGAL ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I am rising today to recognize a tremendous milestone in Davenport. On Saturday, November 8, Regal Road public school celebrated its centennial anniversary. This means that since 1914 Regal Road has been at the forefront of guiding and educating Davenport's young people.

Regal Road public school was constructed for the Dovercourt community just as the area was annexed to the city of Toronto. It is a magnificent building, designed in the beaux arts style by architect Franklin E. Belfrey, who also designed many other schools in Toronto, including Oakwood Collegiate, also in my riding. In 2007, the city of Toronto declared the school a heritage building.

Regal Road is a wonderful school, located at the northeast corner of Davenport Road and Dufferin Street. My colleague from Northumberland-Quinte West actually attended Regal Road when he first moved to Toronto in the 1960s. The school enrolls approximately 520 students from JK to grade 6 and offers a dual-track system, with both English and French immersion curriculums. Reflective of my riding of Davenport, students at Regal Road are from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

I had the pleasure to meet a tour group from Regal Road at the Legislature in September, and I look forward to meeting more students from this exciting school going forward.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Todd Smith: Today, the government releases its fall economic statement. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said Ontarians should be very concerned about the direction in which this province is heading. The

recent interim report by Ed Clark is proof the Liberals will not make tough decisions to reduce spending to balance the books.

We can expect today's economic statement to continue the Liberals' unrealistic and unaffordable path that puts front-line services in jeopardy while hurting families in every part of this province, including those having the hardest time.

Mr. Speaker, this government is spending beyond its means. The Bank of Canada and the Conference Board of Canada have also provided evidence that the government's path is unsustainable. Under the Liberals, our debt has doubled and our annual debt interest payment now approaches \$11 billion. That's taxpayers' money that should be invested in front-line health care, first-rate education, reliable roads and transit. All Ontarians are paying the price for debt interest costs that take money out of priority services like health care and education.

This Liberal government is always trying to blame someone else for not getting their own house in order. They've doubled the debt in just 11 years. They continually blame lower-than-expected revenues and the federal government. This Liberal government must take responsibility for their bad policy decisions. I hope they will do that today.

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of travelling to Ukraine to support a medical humanitarian mission where Canadian doctors performed surgery on patients who were victims of the war in eastern Ukraine, people who were fighting for their freedom and their democracy. I also had the opportunity to visit the national Holodomor memorial, and I stand here today to commemorate the Holodomor.

Holodomor commemoration week, which is this week, pays tribute to the 81st anniversary of the Holodomor, when Joseph Stalin closed Ukraine's borders and confiscated grain to destroy the Ukrainian population that resisted his rule, who had sought the freedom and democracy that the people of Ukraine are fighting for today. During that time, 17 people per minute, 1,000 per hour and 25,000 per day were dying from famine. The world was silent. Millions died as a result.

My grandmother was one of those people who survived the famine, and she lost three of her brothers to the Soviet regime. She once told me that she hopes the victims of the Holodomor will not only be remembered but honoured. Honouring means not just remembering them and commemorating them, but also learning from their mistakes, learning from the mistakes that we made, and making sure we take the steps to make sure it never happens again.

One of the things that needs to be done is to make sure our young people here in Ontario learn about the Holodomor. That is why I'm so pleased to be here today to stand with the leaders of the Ukrainian community who have worked towards that for so many years, with

you, Mr. Speaker, and other members of the Legislature who co-sponsored a bill to commemorate the Holodomor, and with our Premier and our education minister, who have spoken in the past about the importance of teaching the Holodomor and have ensured that the Holodomor will be part of our curriculum so that every Ontarian learns about the Holodomor.

Today, I'd like to take this opportunity to not only reflect and to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor, but to ask us to re-commit ourselves to make sure we learn from the mistakes of the past and make sure tragedies like this and those that are happening in Ukraine never happen again. Let us do what my grandmother would have asked: Let us not only remember the victims; let us not only commemorate the victims; let us honour them.

MALADIE DE CROHN ET COLITE ULCÉREUSE

CROHN'S DISEASE AND COLITIS

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Je suis fière et honorée de me lever aujourd'hui afin de manifester mon soutien à l'égard du mois de la sensibilisation à la maladie de Crohn et à la colite. La maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse sont les deux formes les plus courantes de maladies inflammatoires de l'intestin. Il s'agit de maladies chroniques qui causent l'inflammation de l'intestin. Actuellement, il n'existe aucun traitement curatif connu contre elles et on en ignore la cause.

Les Ontariens ont plus de raisons que quiconque dans le monde d'être préoccupés par la maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse. Près de 95 000 Ontariens vivent avec l'une ou l'autre de ces maladies. En effet, monsieur le Président, ma famille est une parmi bien d'autres en Ontario qui sont touchées par la maladie de Crohn. Deux de mes cousines souffrent de cette maladie, alors je connais bien les défis qui se présentent quand les gens vivent avec la maladie.

Depuis 40 ans, Crohn et Colite Canada travaille à la découverte d'un traitement curatif contre la maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse, ainsi qu'à l'amélioration de la vie des enfants et des adultes touchés par cette maladie chronique.

As mentioned earlier, I would just like to recognize once again Andrew Holt and his mother, Martha, who are here today, volunteers, and the staff de Crohn et Colite Canada pour leurs efforts et leur dévouement. Ils travaillent fort pour faciliter le quotidien des personnes vivant avec cette maladie, et pour ceci, je les remercie infiniment. Thank you.

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NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her

question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning service cuts at CCACs. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence of the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Clark assumes ballot item number 22 and Ms. MacLeod assumes ballot item number 39.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I wish to thank my newly minted deputy minister, Scott Thompson—the other guy's name escapes me at this moment. I appreciate the entire staff at the Ministry of Finance for their hard work in making today's statement and update possible. Ontario is truly blessed with a wonderful set of individuals in our public service.

I rise today to present the 2014 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. This fall economic statement shows how the government is building Ontario up, supported by four pillars: (1) by investing in people's talents and skills; (2) by building modern infrastructure like roads and public transit; (3) by creating a dynamic and supportive environment where business thrives; and (4) by ensuring a strong pension system so everyone can retire with greater peace of mind.

Underlying the foundation of these pillars is a prudent and thoughtful path to a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're working towards that balance while ensuring that we provide the programs and services that Ontarians expect and rely on.

The global economic environment remains challenging and has contributed to a slower pace of revenue growth. However, there are positive signs that the economy is gaining momentum this year, supported by a resurgence in the United States.

Major indicators for Ontario, including real GDP, exports and household consumption, have posted solid gains. And most significantly for many Ontarians, our unemployment rate declined to 6.5% in October, down a whole percentage point from the beginning of the year. That's the lowest rate of unemployment since 2008.

Our government is working to meet our fiscal targets, despite the challenges of modest economic growth and lower-than-expected revenues. Today, the province's total revenue for 2014-15 is projected to be \$118.4 bil-

lion. That's \$509 million lower than the 2014 budget forecast. This largely reflects lower levels of taxes collected in 2013.

Notwithstanding lower-than-expected revenues, we have overachieved on our fiscal targets for five years in a row, thanks to sound management of program spending. In fact, over the past four years, we've been disciplined, and growth and program spending was held to an average of only 1.2% a year. We delivered public services more efficiently while making critical investments in programs and services that people depend upon, like health care and education.

Ontario has an efficient government. Indeed, Ontario consistently has the lowest per capita program spending among all Canadian provinces.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, our government is taking a balanced path to achieving a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're taking a deliberate approach in the face of tough choices, to ensure that every dollar goes further in achieving higher value for taxpayers. We're doing this by: reviewing and transforming programs; by managing compensation costs; ensuring everyone pays their fair share of taxes; and unlocking the value of provincial assets. As well, we're encouraging collaboration with all levels of government to support these important fiscal measures in achieving our targets.

We are committed to eliminating the deficit while transforming and modernizing public services, but should revenues fall further, the government must consider other tools to balance the budget.

My colleague the Honourable Deb Matthews, President of the Treasury Board, is leading a careful review of every government program. For each program, our Treasury Board colleagues will ask: Is it relevant? Is it effective? Is it efficient? And is it sustainable?

Focusing on evidence and results is critical to the review. The objective: ensuring that sustained funding goes to initiatives that work and deliver better results for people. For the government, that means savings. Those savings targets are set at \$250 million for 2014 and \$500 million for each of the next two years.

As well, we're working hard to manage compensation costs. For example, in August, the government reached a four-year collective agreement with AMAPCEO. This agreement includes a wage freeze in the first two years and a 1.4% wage increase in each of the third and fourth years. It includes no new funding for compensation increases. The cost of wage increases is being offset through changes to benefits and entitlements, making it a net zero deal.

We're also working to manage compensation costs in the broader public sector. If passed, new legislation would authorize the government to control salaries and set hard caps. These clear changes will lead to clear benefits for all.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, our government has reduced taxes for businesses, encouraging growth in jobs and capital investment. Ontario now has a lower combined corporate income tax than the combined tax rate in any of the U.S. states.

Of course, all businesses need to pay their fair share of taxes. When businesses don't pay their fair share, they not only compromise the public's revenues; they disadvantage other businesses that do follow the rules, and that's not fair. We cannot allow the underground economy to grow, which adversely impacts everyone. As such, the underground economy will be forced above ground and brought into the light.

The government is taking action. We're strengthening compliance in high-risk sectors. We're making sure that anyone who wants to do business with the Ontario government has paid their taxes before they're awarded a government contract. We're improving the way government ministries and agencies share information to enforce this compliance. We're taking further measures to address the supply of contraband tobacco. Fair is fair. These steps will ensure that everyone plays by the rules.

Continuous improvement is also a guiding principle in managing provincial assets. Unlocking the value of those assets will help our economy grow while creating jobs and improving government services. It will also create new revenues that will go to pay for public transit.

Let's be clear: The government will not be selling crown corporations for the purposes of meeting its operating costs. The Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets was asked to find ways to increase efficiencies and unlock the full value of Hydro One, OPG and the LCBO. The council has issued its preliminary findings.

At the LCBO and throughout our alcoholic beverage distribution system, we want consumers to have more choice and more convenience while providing greater returns for the people of Ontario.

The council has reviewed the key elements of our electricity system and determined that OPG's generation business should be retained, with a focus on the Darlington nuclear refurbishment. Hydro One's core transmission businesses should also be retained.

But the council says that local distribution is fragmented and inefficient. That's why the council is recommending that the system of about 70 local electricity distributors be improved through consolidation and innovation. Facilitating such consolidations is good energy policy. This will lead to a more efficient, adaptive and lower-cost system.

Our government supports the council's initial findings, and we look forward to receiving its final recommendations. This will help inform the 2015 budget.

Ontario's economy is continuing to create jobs. As noted earlier, our unemployment rate is down to 6.5%. Since the recessionary lows, Ontario has gained over half a million net new jobs, nearly all in full-time, well-paying positions.

Applause.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes. More needs to be done, and more is being done. That is why we're taking steps to ensure that people, particularly young people, have the skills and training required for those rewarding jobs.

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To that end, we're launching programs so that high school students can reach their full potential. Next year,

Experience Ontario will allow high school graduates to gain work experience before they choose their career path. This, and other initiatives, builds on our \$295-million Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy. The Youth Employment Fund has already helped more than 23,000 young adults find jobs. We're also conducting a review of the College of Trades, because skilled trades are fundamental to ensuring that Ontario's economy grows.

For Ontario to grow its economy and create more jobs, the province needs better infrastructure. Ontario is planning to invest more than \$130 billion over the next 10 years in infrastructure to make us more competitive. We'll be investing \$15 billion in transit projects in the GTHA and nearly \$14 billion in other critical infrastructure projects throughout Ontario. By investing today, we're creating jobs and growing our economy to meet the needs of tomorrow.

We're also modernizing and strengthening Ontario's business sector. Our plan includes maintaining a competitive tax environment, reducing regulations and helping businesses manage their electricity costs so that they can prosper.

We're also fostering strategic partnerships through our \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund to support growth in our key sectors, such as advanced manufacturing.

As well, we're fostering regional growth using the economic development funds like RED, the Rural Economic Development Program. Recently, RED provided support to the Hensall District Co-operative, located in Huron county. This co-operative markets high-value field crops for over 2,000 farmers, thereby creating jobs and generating \$4.3 million in private investment.

As part of our province's Going Global trade strategy to promote international trade, Premier Kathleen Wynne recently led a mission to China that attracted almost \$1 billion in new investments. These investments by Chinese companies will create thousands of jobs across Ontario. These efforts also spur economic growth for the arts and tourism sector.

It is also why we are very proud to be hosting the Pan Am and Parapan American Games, which inject billions of dollars in infrastructure, in our stadiums, community centres and sporting facilities for the long-term benefit of future generations to come. The profile of these international games has already created tremendous economic interest by investors throughout North and South America to Ontario. They also see and appreciate the wonderful diaspora of cultures that make up our great province.

We also value our heritage, as well as the First Nations and Métis Nation people. In fact, in September we announced funding of \$5.9 million for commemorative events, including the 400th anniversary of the franco-phone presence in Ontario.

Je suis très fier que les gouvernements du Québec et de l'Ontario collaborent plus étroitement. Par exemple, nous aurons une réunion conjointe de membres des Conseils des ministres de ces deux provinces plus tard cette semaine. Une coopération accrue renforcera les économies du Québec et de notre province de l'Ontario.

Remarks in Portuguese.

For the benefit of Hansard, we value our collaboration with the province of Quebec in both official languages, as well as others as may occur, the main point being that Ontario welcomes greater relations with other provinces. Our Premier, who has been a leader in the Council of the Federation, will host a joint Quebec-Ontario cabinet meeting later this week. Premier Wynne is working hard to increase co-operation among all provinces and territories, which can only mean good things for the nation's economy. What is good for Quebec is good for Ontario; what is good for Ontario is good for Quebec, and what is good for Quebec and Ontario is good for Canada.

As well, we're leading and working with provincial and federal partners to establish a co-operative capital markets regulatory system. That means our capital markets will be more competitive on the global stage and safer for individual investors.

To improve our financial services industry, we're reviewing the mandates of FSCO, of DICO, the legislative framework for credit unions and caisses populaires, as well as the regulation of financial planners. Having appropriate oversight in these important sectors is crucial.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to be working closely with a recently announced trading hub of Chinese currency in Canada. This is unique. It will be the first such hub in North America, putting Toronto at a competitive advantage over financial centres such as New York and Chicago. It will support greater trade with one of the biggest economies in the world. We're proud to do so, in collaboration with the federal and BC governments.

A strong and secure retirement income system is to everyone's benefit. People deserve to enjoy their retirement years, and that's why we're creating a mandatory, made-in-Ontario pension plan called the ORPP. I'm proud of my colleague, the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Associate Minister of Finance responsible for the ORPP, who has begun her work toward a pension launch in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, when the global recession struck, the federal and Ontario governments worked together to limit its worst effects on people. Working in conjunction to simulate investment helped us weather the economic storm. However, that collaboration between our two governments is still much needed. We need to work together today to secure long-term prosperity for Ontario and Canada tomorrow. The federal government must avoid further unilateral actions that hurt the people of Ontario; actions that put the province's fiscal plan at risk.

As the federal government moves into surpluses, it should reinvest in the provinces. It's not that we're asking the federal government to invest its money; we're saying that more of the money collected in Ontario, from Ontarians, be reinvested back in Ontario. In many respects, the federal government collects a bucket of water from Ontario and returns a thimble. We need some of that water to flow back.

Ontarians contribute to the federal coffers \$11 billion more every year than they receive back. That gap

amounts to about \$850 per person, or \$3,400 per family of four. Ontario has consistently been a net contributor to the federation, and that's how it should be. But the time has come for greater federal support to benefit the Ontario economy and, in turn, the economy of all of Canada. To that end, we call on the federal government to match Ontario's investments in the Ring of Fire. We also ask the federal government to increase investments in public transit.

Mr. Speaker, we talk a lot about economic stimulus, but when it comes to the feds it's acting in reverse, it seems. Lack of federal investment is holding us back and slowing us down. It's like we're driving ahead but the federal government is letting the air out of our tires. We can't go as far, we can't go as fast and we can't go to where we need to be. The time for that investment is now.

We're determined to build a fairer and healthier Ontario. The province is taking action in reducing poverty. It's aimed at supporting people to find meaningful employment at a fair wage. Allowing people to realize their full potential will reduce poverty, and that improves the economy. That's why we're helping low-wage workers by raising the minimum wage to the highest of any province in Canada, at \$11 per hour, and that's indexed into the future.

Mr. Speaker, driving a car to and from work is also a necessity for many Ontarians, and that's why we're taking action in reforms fighting fraud and eliminating abuses, so that auto insurance can be more affordable. We know that more needs to be done. Rates have gone down by 6% since August 2013, but we've now introduced legislation—under debate today, I believe—that, if passed, would bring rates down even further in the coming year.

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Mr. Speaker, from now until our next budget, this government is pursuing its mandate for action. Our clear path to balance is supported by four essential pillars: investing in people's skills and talents; building modern infrastructure and transportation networks; creating a supportive and dynamic business climate; and ensuring retirement security for everyone in Ontario. These targeted investments and our determined effort to make every dollar count will help eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

In short, we are creating opportunity and security for all. We are building Ontario up.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time, and thank you to all my colleagues.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm loath to interrupt statements like that—during ministerial statements. I have to express a little bit of my disappointment that the banter going back and forth was not conducive to our normal ministers' statements.

It's now time for responses.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Today's fall economic update continues the Liberal government's unrealistic and unaffordable path that puts front-line services in jeopardy and will

hurt families in every part of this province, including those having the hardest time.

The government is clearly spending beyond its means, but instead of a responsible plan, the Liberals spun us a fairy tale of balancing the budget with more spending, higher deficits and bigger debt.

The Liberals brag about the economic outlook improving, but Ontario's fiscal outlook is actually worse. Revenue is \$509 million lower than the 2014 budget forecast, and that was only four months ago. Most troubling is the fact that our GDP growth is down to 1.9% even though it was forecasted as 2.1%, again only four months ago. These are major changes in only a few months.

The Bank of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have all provided evidence that the government's path is unsustainable. In fact, a recent report from the chamber entitled *How Bad Is It?* concluded that "Ontario will not grow its way out of debt."

That's not all the chamber had to say, and in fact much of it flies in the face of what the minister just said. These are quotes from the Ontario chamber: "Ontario's fiscal situation is becoming increasingly dire...." "We are likely to reach a state of crisis unless the province cuts spending and changes the way it does business." It makes a "clear case for urgency." "Government must fundamentally change the way it does business in many program areas." "Increased interest payments on the debt will further crowd out government's capacity to spend on programs and services valued by Ontarians, such as education, health care, and transportation."

Here, Speaker, is exactly what that means to families and seniors across Ontario. Here's what a \$12.5-billion deficit means: The ONA has announced that 1,600 nursing jobs are cut; diabetes testing strips in Ontario—cut; physiotherapy for seniors in Ontario—cut; cataract surgeries in Ontario—cut. That's the Premier's dirty little secret she doesn't want Ontarians to know: Today, under her watch, health care jobs and services are being cut every single day.

Perhaps the most disgraceful thing about the situation we find ourselves in is that the Liberals are always trying to blame someone else for not getting their own house in order. They've doubled their debt in only 11 years and continue to blame others, including the federal government.

Speaker, we found the truth in the government's own public accounts documents, which show that the Liberal government has actually received \$600 million more from Ottawa this year than last year. In fact, in the fall economic statement of today, it says that we've got another increase of \$8.3 million. It's not a \$600-million deficit; it's \$600 million more from the federal government that this government has not told us about. The federal government is balancing its budget while at the same time providing tax relief to Ontario.

The Ontario Liberals' appetite for wasteful and self-interested spending has left us with a deficit larger than all other provinces combined, and they need to take

responsibility for their bad decisions. How can we trust a government that says it's going to invest in transit when they leave themselves a loophole to use that asset sale money on anything but transit? How can we trust a government that bulldozes ahead with a new pension plan when their own internal documents show us it's going to cost the province of Ontario tens of thousands of jobs? Twice in today's economic statement, the government explicitly told us they're going to be raising taxes—they called it "other tools"—to balance the budget.

In closing, this government would do well to heed the advice of the chamber of commerce: You need to fundamentally change the way you do business. It's the only way we can get this province going in the right direction again and make Ontario first.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to respond to the fall economic statement on behalf of New Democrats.

Clearly Ontario is growing slower, and there is less in the cupboard. The fall economic statement shows that we're going to miss, again, four years' worth of growth targets that were set out just a few short months ago. The Liberals are also missing revenue targets, and there is less in the bank: a \$509-million shortfall of provincial revenue targets. This raises even more concerns about what they will sell to cover their losses. The desperation, actually, is a little bit alarming.

Over the last two weeks, we saw that the OLG is looking to expand online gambling, for instance. They have reached out to their 56,000 priority customers. Last week, I got a call at my office from the executive director of the social planning council. Her 23-year-old autistic son, who is on ODSP, got such a call. You do not balance a budget on the most vulnerable in this province. It is despicable.

The shiny promises that the Liberals made in the campaign have disappeared. There is nothing about the Trillium Trust and how it will function, except there's a loophole so that they can siphon that money away.

Of interest to my community: The high-speed rail promise made by Minister Murray has disappeared. The people of Windsor and London are looking for sustainable rail transit as well, as are the mayors of Niagara region, and they can make a good case for that.

With this document, the Liberals are raising even more doubts about the promises that they've made to Ontarians.

For the first time, you are saying that auto insurance rates didn't come down by 8%, as they first claimed they would; in fact, it's 6%. Now they're saying that a 15% reduction may not happen at all.

There is lots of information that's just plain missing. There is a lot of talk about the Stephen Harper-approved PRPPs, but nothing that gives comfort to the US Steel retirees wondering what will happen to them. It is very telling that you have prioritized the PRPPs, I think.

There is nothing about the services that will be cut by the Liberals' 6% slash to just about every ministry every year—on page 244 of the austerity budget—all of this within the context of 53% of children in the city of

Toronto living in poverty and 170,000 people and families who are waiting for affordable housing. How will you ever stabilize the economy if people do not have stable housing?

This is, by and large, a marketing document for the Liberals. Quite honestly, the people of this province deserve better.

Of note, for the first time that I've seen—and I have consulted many of the more experienced members—you're mentioning MPPs by name, as if this is a book of fiction. Ontarians deserve answers and transparency, and this is all spin.

1350

If you want some suggestions about how to find revenue, we have come to the table with some constructive suggestions: You should close the HST corporate tax loopholes; you should bring the public service's IT services back in-house and stop paying two to three times as much, as you are; you should stop the privatization agenda; and you should stop wasting money.

In your document here, you say, when you're reviewing—the Treasury Board president is going to be reviewing government programs—you'll ask, "Is it relevant, effective and efficient?" Public services are, but not when you privatize them and you outsource them and you pay two to three times as much for them.

The finance minister says that they have overachieved on their fiscal targets. Mr. Speaker, if this is overachievement, I would hate to see what an underachieving Liberal looks like in the province of Ontario. When you scratch the surface, you get more surface. It's disappointing, and the people of this province, quite honestly, deserve better.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support it. I will affix my name and send it with page Nicole.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please.

I would deeply appreciate the opportunity to finish routine proceedings in the normal manner. If you have conversations that are too loud, the petitions are not being heard. Thank you very much.

We'll continue petitions. The member from London West.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Claudia to take to the table.

MIDWIFERY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas midwifery care in Ontario is perfectly aligned with transforming the health care system toward quality care that uses resources effectively;

"Whereas midwives, who are primary care providers, ensure the provision of the right care, in the right place, and at the right time;

"Whereas the Minister of Health expressed commitment to work closely with midwives to ensure they have the support they need to carry out their work as well as grow the profession;

"Whereas midwifery in Ontario is currently being destabilized by negotiations that have broken down, a contract that expired on March 31, 2014, and a compensation structure that has not addressed pay equity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government resume negotiations with the Association of Ontario Midwives and enable midwives to continue to provide the highest standard of primary health care to women and their families."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition. I'll send it to the table with page Steven.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

"Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

"Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

"Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding."

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to give it to page Nick to bring to the Clerk.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

I agree with this petition, I affix my name to it and I will give it to page Moiz to bring forward.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

"Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Nick.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is from the Ottawa-area first responders.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas emergency response workers ... confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

"Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

"Whereas Bill 2 'An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder' sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 'An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder'."

Our first responders deserve no less. I'm going to affix my signature and give it to page Maja to deliver.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act ... is to 'provide for the protection and

conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990....; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

1400

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, I keep getting these petitions from a great number of my constituents in Oxford county. I affix my signature. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I sign my signature to this petition and give it to page Jared to deliver.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, beginning on January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from WSIB and had private insurance; and

"Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119."

I support this and will sign my name and send it with page Nicole.

CYCLING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 25% of Ontario adults regularly cycle and over 50% of children cycle either daily or weekly;

"Whereas a cycling fatality occurs every month in Ontario and thousands of cyclists are injured each month;

"Whereas Ontario is lagging behind provinces like British Columbia and Quebec that have invested \$31 million and \$200 million respectively in cycling infrastructure;

"Whereas investing in cycling infrastructure in Ontario will create jobs and benefit the economy, reduce traffic congestion and pollution, protect those sharing the road, and encourage active transportation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario release a comprehensive cycling strategy for Ontario that includes dedicated funding to match municipal investments in cycling infrastructure, education initiatives to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of all road users, and a review and update of provincial legislation including the Highway Traffic Act and the Planning Act to ensure roadways are safe for all users..."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this and give it to Steven to be delivered to the table.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here with a great number of signatures from the tri-county area of Oxford, Norfolk and Elgin. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

"Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

"Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

"Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

"Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Claudia to bring down to the Clerks' table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Nick.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Monday, November 24, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Wednesday, November 26, 2014, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 8:

—notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire;

—witnesses are scheduled on a first-come first-served basis;

—each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the second day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 3 p.m. on Thursday, November 27, 2014; and

That the committee be authorized to meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on Monday, December 1, 2014 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Wednesday, December 3, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration; and

On Monday, December 1, 2014, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

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That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, December 4, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved notice of motion number 8. I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion as it relates to Bill 8.

I'm very pleased to participate in this debate, and of course I look forward to hearing comments from other honourable members of all parties.

As I have said before, last June the people of this province sent our government to Queen's Park with a very strong mandate. They've asked to us work along with other parties and Ontarians on issues that are im-

portant to Ontarians. And one of the issues that I think was clearly spoken to by all parties was matters around accountability and transparency within the government and the political process. They were clear that they wanted this Legislature to move past the games and grandstanding of the previous Parliament and get down to work.

It's an issue I heard quite often while I was in my community of Ottawa Centre, knocking on doors on a regular basis and meeting with constituents. They often showed their surprise and disappointment at a lot of the stalling of work that took place under the previous minority Legislature. And one of the clear indications and instructions I received from my constituents was that we need to move ahead; we need to move with important policies that ensure we're building a stronger, more open and transparent province.

In regard to Bill 8: This is an extremely thoughtful and well-needed piece of legislation. What is more, the Premier has made openness and transparency a top priority since day one. Bill 8 would make serious improvements and changes across the broader public sector. It would strengthen political accountability and make the business of government more transparent. It would give officers of the Legislature more responsibility in their roles, and would introduce more oversight and accountability to public organizations that provide services to the broader public.

I would like to provide some specifics on what Bill 8 will do.

If passed, Bill 8 will implement executive compensation reforms immediately. The government would become authorized to directly control the compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector and take action to ensure compliance.

Bill 8 would set up the office of the patient Ombudsman and grant investigative powers to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

It will also enable greater oversight and accountability of air ambulance service providers. The parts of Bill 8 that would make improvements at Ornge have been before the Legislature for almost three years. Those parts have been debated an astounding 23 times in this Legislature since 2012.

The bill will also require expense information for MPPs to be posted online for out-of-riding travel, hotels, meals and hospitality. It will require expense information for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their respective staff to be posted online as well: all very concrete steps to ensure that the government is more transparent; that all the functions of government and this Legislature, like all MPPs, are more open and accountable to our constituents.

Speaker, this bill has been considered extensively by the Legislature and needs to pass. This bill was first introduced eight months ago and has been debated several times in the Legislature. We tried to pass this bill before the election but couldn't because the opposition needlessly tied up the business of the Legislature. This

piece of legislation was part of the plan that we took to the people of Ontario in June. They supported that plan, and we intend to follow through on our commitment by passing Bill 8 and enacting Bill 8 through this Legislature. The alternative is letting the opposition drag out debate on the bill for months and even years, as they have done in the past. We need to move forward with this bill.

We know that there is support from members of all parties on this bill. In fact, members from both opposition parties have made positive comments in support of this bill. For instance, the member from Nepean–Carleton said, “Most of this bill, we agree with, on the opposition side, so I think that with some amendments, this bill would receive support from the official opposition.” The member from Timmins–James Bay said, “A lot of this stuff is things we are generally in favour of.”

Speaker, we invite members to propose amendments in committee so that we can work together to make the public sector more accountable. This bill, if passed, will allow for more transparent, more open and accountable government. This bill, if passed, will ensure that our constituents know how their members work and operate in terms of our expense claims, our voting records—things that are important information that should be available to our constituents as easily as possible.

Time allocation is one part of the legislative tool kit available and has been used by all three parties here in our province. From 1999 to 2003, for instance, the last Conservative government time-allocated about 60% of its bills. Although it is our government’s preference to allow bills to progress through the normal course, these types of motions are sometimes necessary, especially when there are bills from the last Parliament that Ontarians are counting on us to pass and that have gone through substantive debate over the course of the last Parliament and the new Parliament.

The voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June. They did not want any more stalling of the Legislature by the opposition parties.

I urge all members in this House to support this motion and help pass Bill 8 as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words about the government House leader’s notice of motion regarding Bill 8.

I feel it’s important that I quote the standing orders. This motion quotes standing order 47(a), which says, “The government House leader may move a motion with notice providing for the allocation of time to any proceeding on a government bill or substantive government motion.”

The reason I read that standing order, Speaker, is because I want to try, in a few minutes, to give the other side of the story. I firmly believe the government House leader’s speech only told half of the story. I think it’s very important for members who are here and for the public to get the other side of the story.

The government House leader, when he makes his speech, really doesn’t lay out the facts of why we’re here today. If he really wanted co-operation and consultation, he could have acted a little bit differently in some of the dealings since the June 12 election. He makes a statement about stalling tactics and delay tactics. He uses the words “games” and “grandstanding,” and I’m not particularly sure what he means when he says that. Certainly, it’s not in the context of this session of Parliament.

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I made myself very clear when I first met the government House leader in my capacity as the opposition House leader. Just as an aside, a number of people have asked me today about my change of seats. I made a change in seating because I felt like I was bargaining with someone who wasn’t being forthcoming in terms of fair, honest negotiations. I didn’t want to sit and look at the government House leader another day. In fact, I am quite happy sitting by the third party House leader because, just in the short time I’ve been here, we’ve been able to talk about co-operation much more so than anything the government House leader has said in a meeting.

I want to go back to the very first meeting I had with the government House leader, when we talked about bills. We talked about what bills the government wanted to pass. They were very open about the bills they wanted to have passed. Granted, the list would expand. It would start at four bills, then go to five, then go to six. Now it’s at seven bills that the government has told us in the House leaders’ meeting.

Again, when we bring up questions like this in question period and the Premier stands up and says, “We’re going to refer that to the House leaders,” that gives you the illusion that there’s actually a three-way conversation and co-operation. I want you to know something, Speaker: That has not been the case under the government House leader’s watch. What is said behind closed doors is not what’s being said here in the House. I want to make that statement today.

I have not in any way, shape or form indicated to this government that we were going to be unduly delaying legislation, that we were going to be playing games, that we were going to be grandstanding. In fact, I was open and transparent, to use the government’s own words. I was very open and transparent—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: You know what? If the minister wants to stand up and take—I think the government House leader had 33 minutes left. If the Treasury Board minister wants to stand up and take some of the 33 minutes that the government has left on the clock, by all means do so. I have my opportunity to put my side of the story, because I think you got half the story right there.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: I was very honest, open and transparent when they asked me what bills I wanted hearings on. There’s a session going on right now, Minister of Education, regarding Bill 10. We were open, honest and transparent right from the start. We said we wanted

province-wide hearings on Bill 10. I negotiated into the night, a couple of weeks ago, with the government House leader to try to get a couple of days of hearings outside the city of Toronto. I thought I had a deal. I felt very upset when the Premier's office squashed that deal at the 11th hour. Again, we had some issues with the towing provisions of the insurance bill. We wanted to have a few hearings.

There were some bills like Bill 35: I understand that the bill that is tabled now was the bill that went through Parliament and was amended by committee. I'm not averse to having a discussion about that bill and programming that bill. The same with this bill: The government House leader was quick to quote the member for Nepean-Carleton about some of the provisions in that bill. Again, we didn't have much problem in working on a co-operative framework at the House leaders' meeting to have a few hours of debate, some committee time and then some third reading debate.

But don't ask me for my opinion on what bills I wanted to travel, don't ask me what bills I wanted slowed down so that we could get public opinion, and then totally deal with standing order 47 and time allocation. I'd have more respect for this government if they just did time allocation on all seven bills and tabled it so that the two other parties can know your plans. Don't sit across the table from me and ask for my opinion when you're not going to listen to one thing I say. Don't insult me and don't insult the House leader for the third party. If you're going to sit there and use words about co-operating with the opposition and making Parliament work, then, you know what? You can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. You can't say one thing in a House leaders' meeting and then do something else on the floor of the chamber.

The fact of the matter is, Speaker, that this time allocation motion is just like the others. This is a substantive bill. There are 82 pages. It amends 16 acts. Essentially, what you're going to have on Monday, November 24, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., is 17 people who are going to be able to make a presentation. They're going to get five minutes to make their statement. There's going to be nine minutes, apportioned between the three parties, to ask questions. The following time the committee meets is two days later, on Wednesday, November 26. In the two hours that they're going to meet in the early afternoon, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., you'll have eight people making their presentations. You'll probably be on your ninth deputation. Then you'll flip over to 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., where you'll finish up that person and get another eight people.

The fact of the matter is, the government has decided that 34 people are going to appear before the committee and talk about this bill. That's similar to what they've done with Bill 10 today, even though we've had so many people across this province indicate that they wanted that bill slowed down.

I gave my assurance, by the way, on Bill 10 that once we had province-wide hearings and dealt with clause-by-

clause, I would do everything under my power to bring that bill back and have passage in time for the government to deal with the regulations. All I wanted was the opportunity for people to have their voices heard. I didn't ask for province-wide hearings on all seven bills; I didn't ask for that. I asked for a few select bills to be given that opportunity and for us to work in that co-operative vein at House leaders', to try to get that done.

I've been very open and honest in what I wanted, and I have to tell you, Speaker, I've been extremely frustrated. At every House leaders' meeting, I asked about committee hearing travel. I also asked about having Laura Miller and Peter Faist appear before the justice committee. Talk about trying to be open and transparent: You want to have a committee meet and actually hear from all the witnesses before you start report writing—but, oh, no, not in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario. I joked with the third party House leader today. You know, she talks about the activist centre. I think we're going to draw a line right between the two House leaders here, and that will be the activist centre. I'll be on the right of centre and he'll be on the left of centre. But I think we could get more activation of government legislation if they listened to us.

This isn't a tough situation. We have a number of things that are before us. We've got a number of issues that other Legislatures seem to be able to take and deal with. One of the ones that is near and dear to my heart: I'm on the Speaker's security committee. We haven't had a meeting yet, and I'm concerned about that. We had a very significant incident happen on Parliament Hill. There was a story a couple of weeks ago that the BC Legislature has been able to handle some improvements to their security. I think we need to get moving on some issues.

I can no longer sit idly by and not comment when the House leaders' process is continually spinning its wheels. I'm going to lay my cards on the table, Speaker. I pledged, when I became House leader—I was asked by Mike Crawley, I think it was, from the CBC about whether I was going to ring bells and delay legislation. You know what? I didn't think I needed to. I thought, if I was going to be asked my opinion on two or three or four pieces of legislation, that I'd actually get listened to.

I'm a fair and a reasonable person. In this Legislature, a couple of times, under private members' business, I was able to get all-party support for a couple of my bills. So I know what it's like to work across party lines to get things done. But don't insult me and insult my party by asking for our opinion and then not addressing it—ignoring it. I want no part of that.

Again, I want to say that there are some bills that our caucus doesn't want to stall, yet there are other bills that we feel people need to be heard on. We're going to continue to present our views.

This bill in particular, as I said earlier, deals with about 16 amendments. There are a number of things that we've spoken about in this House. I'm sure this is one of those bills, even though it's a very large bill—as I said earlier, it's 82 pages. There is something, that I think

we've all talked about in our communities, that needs to be done in terms of openness and transparency.

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I wish the government would have gone the other way on openness and transparency and allowed us to have Peter Faist and Laura Miller testify. I think it would have been great to have a select committee on the Ornge scandal. I think we still should have a select committee, as Laurie Scott is calling for, to deal with the whole issue of abuse. From our caucus's perspective, we're going to continue to talk about those things. But again, don't sit on the government side and start giving yourself the illusion that we're stalling the proceedings. The bells that rang, quite frankly, were trying to raise awareness on the Ornge scandal. We still believe, on this side of the House, that an all-party select committee to deal with those issues with Ornge would have been the right thing to do. It would have been the right thing for the Legislature to come through in a minority Parliament and make that decision.

When people talk about ringing the bells, we rang the bells for a purpose. We rang them for a purpose. We started this new Parliament with some—we took the government at their word, that they were willing to sit down and discuss openness and transparency. Yes, Speaker, this is an openness and transparency bill. Yes, it will go through committee. Yes, it will come back here under this motion and be passed quickly after public hearings with their 34 people who can attend and the debate for third reading. But it still speaks to the issue that this government is failing Ontarians.

They can't say one thing in the House and do something completely different in a House leaders' meeting. I'm sorry, Speaker, but I had to get those comments on the record. I'm sure the government House leader should just deal with his bills. If he wants them time-allocated, have the guts to look us in the face and table that motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Right from the activist centre to the left of the centre line is the NDP.

I've got to say, I agree with pretty well everything that my colleague the House leader for the Conservative Party has raised. I think the government tried to build an expectation, when they came in with their majority government, that they really wanted to work with the opposition and find a way for us to be able to move forward an agenda, that allowed them to get their agenda, allowed them to pass their bills, and gave the opposition an opportunity to give some scrutiny to legislation.

I think that is not a bad idea. When I first got here in 1990, there was no such thing as standing order 47. The only way you could stop debate was by calling the question, and there wasn't even a limit to how much you could speak in this House. I remember various members—the member from St. Catharines, my God, how he would take the floor and go on for a day or two about absolutely anything he wanted to talk about. But that was

his right as a member and, yes, it was kind of hard to take at times—and I was known once or twice in that first Parliament for having done so myself because of decisions that were made by our whip at the time. But the point was, even in a majority Parliament—

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's making that noise is what's driving me crazy here. It's as if it's picking up something every time I hit the desk.

When I first got here in 1990, even in a majority Parliament, the government couldn't just do what it wanted. It had to work with the opposition parties to be able to move its agenda forward. This is how it worked, and it was, I think, a fairly good system. The government would decide what it wanted as a bill. Let's say it was the fall. It would introduce the bill at first reading in the fall. They would conclude second reading sometime in the fall, when it came to the actual bill. Sometimes the bill had very little debate because there would be agreement amongst the House leaders to give it some time in committee. But here's the kicker: Normally, we didn't do the hearings in the session that the bill was introduced; we did them in the intersession. It allowed the committees to go out on the road and actually talk to the public about the bill. And you know what? That worked for the government and it also worked for the opposition.

I'll give you an example of one bill, and that was the creation of the sustainable forestry development act that was done under our government by Howard Hampton when he was Minister of Natural Resources. I think it was introduced in the fall, because I kind of remember having the hearings in the winter, but I might be wrong. Maybe I've got the timing wrong. But it was introduced, we had a fairly short debate at second reading, and the bill went out for hearings and it travelled northern Ontario. Why? It was about sustainable forestry development, so we went to places around the province that were affected by forestry.

I always remember that there was a newly elected member who came in in a by-election when Mr. Dennis Drainville left, and that was Chris Hodgson, who would become the member to go on that committee.

Chris—I'm going to use his name because he's no longer a member in this place, so I can call him Chris. He's actually a good friend. He's now president of the Ontario Mining Association. He went out as an eager-beaver member. I always remember that because I was an eager-beaver member too. As you, Mr. Arnott, of the class of 1990—the few of us who are left—went out and heard what people had to say about the bill. Yes, he was being oppositional to our bill; there was no question about that, as was his right. But he was also trying to find ways to make the bill more functional.

While we were in places like Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay and Kapuskasing and the various places that we went to, he would reach out to people to come and talk to the committee about the bill. They would make suggestions, from the forest industry, the First Nations communities and others, about what they thought

were the problems with the bill, and guess what happened? After two or three weeks of hearings—I don't remember how long we were gone, but it seems to me that one may have had up to four weeks of hearings, if I remember that one—God, we got to be friends on that committee. Imagine that. Members of this assembly actually got along—Conservatives, New Democrats, Liberals. We called each other by our first names. We established friendships and relationships that last till today. I still consider Chris a friend from the experience I had in 1990—whenever it was. Why? Because those committees not only served the function of giving the public a chance to have a hearing on the bill in question; they allowed members to work together, because the House leaders had to work out ahead of time how much time the bill was going to have in committee, and the government House leader had to satisfy the opposition that the time was sufficient enough to be able to satisfy his critics and his caucus about how long they'd be out on the road. And guess what else happened? We actually amended legislation.

Can you imagine that, Steve? Oh, I can't use "Steve." The member for Leeds—Grenville, the House leader of the Conservative Party, can you imagine? We actually went into clause-by-clause after all these hearings and there would be amendments that were brought forward by the opposition, and, God almighty, they passed. We'd actually take those amendments and we'd incorporate them into the bill. I'm not saying for a second that we took them all—absolutely not. But there were a number of amendments that were accepted because members of the committee dropped their partisanship somewhat when they were on the road because they now felt somewhat empowered to be able to make a change to the bill and they felt that they were doing their jobs and were being useful.

The public felt engaged because, "Hey, I've talked to the Conservative member," or the NDP member or the Liberal member, "and they tell me they're going to bat for us." Everybody felt as if the process was somewhat theirs, and we actually passed legislation that was changed quite a bit from second reading to the time we brought it back to third, and that was because of the committee process.

This government comes in and says, "Oh, we're going to have to time-allocate everything because it's so important. Oh my God, the world is going to end; it's going to come to an end if we don't pass this legislation."

Well, it never took less than a year to pass legislation in this place when I first got here. The Legislature had operated for, at that point, 100 years; I think the anniversary of the Legislature was about the time that I was elected, so it was about 100 years. For 100 years, this place operated with no time allocation. It operated with sometimes very acrimonious debates at second reading and sometimes quite partisan campaigns in the time that we weren't in committee, but the thing that they had to do: They did have to work together because the government did not have a time allocation role. The only

way that we could allow a bill to go quickly through the House or without too much interference from the opposition—as we would see it, as a government, interference; it would be the same for the Tories or the Liberals—was to go and make a deal with the opposition. It was virtually a minority Parliament when you really stop and think about it.

This is maybe unfair because this is my view, and if somebody feels differently I would suggest they get in the debate and explain to me why. But one of the problems that we had in the last minority Parliament was that people had forgotten how to work together. That was the big failure at the beginning, the very beginning of the minority Parliament, of the last session.

Because governments have done time allocation since 1993 or 1994 under the NDP, accelerated under the Tories and concluded by the Liberals—we all have our hands in this, so I can't stand here and say, "Oh, my God, we were so virtuous that we wouldn't do anything the same." I'll tell you one thing: I learned a very good lesson through this, but that's a whole other thing.

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But the point was that the opposition parties and the government forgot how to work together, because for years they didn't have to. For years—at the end of the NDP administration, during the Conservative administration and then under the Liberal administration—they would go in and dictate at House leaders' meetings what was going to happen: "Here, guys. Here, girls. Here's what's happening next week. Have a great day." Boom. That was a House leaders' meeting. Well, it was never that way before.

So, when we fell into a minority Parliament, everybody forgot how to work together, and we were somewhat with our backs up—all of us—and somewhat guarded, because everybody had lost the ability to do that, and those relationships that are so important to making this place work had disappeared. Where those relationships were done was in committees. Members spent time together. They listened to deputations together in different communities across Ontario, they would supper together afterwards, they would be on a bus or a plane to wherever they were going. So you got to know each other and you got to know each other's families, and it really changed the dynamic of how this place works.

I don't blame the government members for thinking, "Oh my God! Imagine that! The opposition brought 400 amendments to the legislation. How terrible!" I'm sorry; that's what committees are about. I've been at committees where Liberals in opposition to us, Tories in opposition to us, and we in opposition to the Liberals and the Tories, brought far more than 400 amendments. My God, I remember a time in this House when we went through clause-by-clause with the Tories, and I don't remember how many amendments there were, but we hadn't gone through half of them and it was eight-and-a-half days later.

But guess what? That's what this place is about. It's not about filibustering, but about giving the opportunity

for legislation to be seen, to be heard, to be vetted and to get the public to have their say, which I'll talk about in a minute. Yes, it gives power a little bit to the opposition to be able to hold the government's feet to the fire, but here's the bottom line: It's a very brilliant system, the parliamentary system, because in the end the government will always get its way, and rightfully so.

Do I like the results of the last election? God, no. I'm sure you do, as Liberals. My good friends in the Conservative Party—I'm sure Steve doesn't like the results of the last election.

Mr. Steve Clark: Not so much.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's that?

Miss Monique Taylor: They're 77% sadder today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, they're sadder today.

Interjection: By 77%.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. All right.

But my point is that the result of the election was decided by the people of Ontario, and once the public has spoken, that's it; we have to live with the result. We lived by that in opposition in the minority Parliament. We said, "We need to respect the public for what they have done. They decided on a minority Parliament."

Guess what? They've given the government a majority this time. I can't argue with that. I don't like it, but that's what it is. So, I say to the government across the way, and I say to the Deputy Premier and the government House leader: Shame on you for bringing in time allocation. I said through the entire minority Parliament that I will not be a party to any time allocation, and I never was. Sometimes we could have done that.

You know, as our whip, Madame Cheri DiNovo from Parkdale—High Park—we would go into discussions with the Conservatives and the Liberals on some bills, and sometimes they were bills that we wanted. The government would come to me—my good friend Mr. John Milloy; I can call him by his first name now, because he's not here. John would come to me and say, "Gilles, this is an important bill for both of us. Let's time-allocate." I'd say, "Absolutely not. The Conservatives have a right to do what they're doing. If they want to speak this bill out or force it into committee by doing whatever, God bless. That is their right."

Even in a position of power, our party recognized and respected the process that, in the end, the public is never wrong, and that when they send us to this place, we need to respect them. What time allocation does, I think, is that it doesn't respect the public.

Here's what's happening now. The government does exactly what my good friend the member from—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Leeds—Grenville. I'm so glad you sit here now.

Mr. Steve Clark: You're going to get that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to learn that soon.

Mr. Steve Clark: You are. You are.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's going to be imprinted, my good buddy.

As the member from Leeds—Grenville said, we went into House leaders' meetings at the beginning of this session with the understanding, because the government sent a pretty direct message to both House leaders and our teams that they were in fact prepared to give us some time in committee and prepared to give us some adequate time in debate, if we were guaranteeing that they could get bills by a certain date.

They gave us a list of bills, and I'm not going to go through that. But both the Conservatives and the New Democrats said, "Okay, we'll take that back to our folks. We understand that you're going to get your bills in the end, and if we can find a way to give the public their say and for us to have our say in the House, that would be a good thing." So we went out and did the work we had to do.

The government never intended to honour anything it had said. So I don't blame my good friend from Leeds—Grenville, the Tory House leader, for being upset. We went through this whole process where the government understood section 47 of the standing orders, and they had no intention of allowing us to have any kind of public hearings outside of Toronto. They had no intention of allowing proper vetting of the legislation by the public. Their game, right from the beginning, was to time-allocate everything. I'm not surprised by that, because I heard what the government had said at the beginning, but having been around this place for a while, I thought, "No, these guys are going to time-allocate," because it is easier to time-allocate than to actually manage a situation and do it well.

That's the other lesson I've learned over the years: The one thing human beings hate to do is manage and make decisions. If you're a boss, it's easier to yell at somebody if they've done something wrong than to say, "Okay, let's sit down and talk about this. Let's try to find a way to not have that mistake happen again," or, "Maybe it's an issue with me as the boss."

That's why I like collective agreements. That's why I like unions, because they have a collective agreement and a grievance procedure. At least those workers are organized and have an ability to be heard.

The point is, nobody wants to manage. What time allocation does is remove the government's responsibility to manage from the Legislature.

I think we've all read our history. The British parliamentary system was developed over 1,000 years from a couple of really basic principles: that we, as a Legislature, never allow the executive—back in them days, the king, but in our days, the cabinet and the Premier—the ability to spend money without the authorization of the Legislature. That's our primary function. Even though that kind of happens, because of time allocation the opposition—and, I argue, the public—has less scrutiny on government expenses.

The other thing that we're responsible for, obviously, is the legislative part of it. The government has the right to legislate bills in order to deal with different issues, as they are with this particular bill about transparency, which I'll get to in a second. They have a right to do that.

But here's the other kicker that drives me crazy: The Legislature, over the years—because we hate to manage, and we don't want any pesky MPPs getting in the way of actually dealing with legislation, we delegate the authority in the bill to regulation.

When I got here, for example, in the sustainable forestry development act, most everything was defined in the legislation. It wasn't permitted, by regulation, for cabinet to make this thing work, other than the planning manuals, which is a whole other issue. But for most bills that we pass through this House, we very, very seldom, in very few examples, will delegate our authority as the Legislature to cabinet. I'm going to give you a good example where this has really served us badly.

Agree or not agree, the Conservative government under Mr. Harris passed legislation that said that if you want to do a casino in your community, you have to have a referendum. Right? Because the NDP government of the day created two or three casinos—three casinos—and the Tories of the day and the opposition were opposed to it. When they got to government, they said, "Well, we'll fix that. You need to have a referendum."

It was really clear what Mike Harris wanted: He wanted a referendum. That legislation was passed, but they delegated the authority of the act—the whole guts of the act was delegated to cabinet.

Mr. McGuinty comes along—I can call him Mr. McGuinty now, because he's no longer the Premier or a member. Mr. McGuinty comes along, and what does he do? He basically says, by regulation, that there won't be any referendum.

Is that what the House pronounced itself on? When the House voted on that bill some years ago, did the House not say, "No, there will be referendums, absolutely"? Fifty per cent plus one of the House said there has to be a referendum. But that decision was voided by the delegation of authority in the act to the cabinet, and the cabinet of the day, under Mr. McGuinty, decided there will be no referendum.

When members in this House, and especially new members on the government side—and I don't mean this in a demeaning way. Listen, I was there. Je me souviens. Coming into this place as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young government member, boy, I was going to change the world. I guess we have changed the world, to a degree, but that's a whole other story. But we tend to believe what our whips, our House leaders and our Premier tell us, and how great we are and why this is so important. Rah, rah, rah, with the caucus. You're doing yourself a disservice, I can tell you.

One of the things we did as a government, that I think was probably the worst mistake we did, was that we introduced the concept of time allocation into our standing orders. I was stupid enough—and I'm going to say it right here—to listen to my House leader and come into this House and give speeches on supporting that.

I remember an opposition member by the name of Ernie Eves coming to see me after that, and he says, "Oh, you will rue the day that you gave that speech." It wasn't

too far after, in 1995, that I recognized what Mr. Eves had told me, and he was right.

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That's why in opposition, in the minority Parliament, I and our caucus never supported time allocation, because it is a bad way of drafting legislation. The government now, by way of this motion, is saying they're going to time-allocate a transparency bill. Think about this for a second. It's a bill about transparency, and we're going to close the doors to the public and say, "We're not going to travel the bill outside of Toronto and we're going to limit how much time there's going to be transparency in the committee process here at Queen's Park." It's a contradiction on every level.

The government members are going to say, "Oh yeah, but you brought 400 amendments, Steve. Oh, that was so"—give me a break. There are rules. If you want to bring 2,000 amendments, bring them on. It may be a tactic by the opposition to slow you down; I'll admit that. It might have been. I don't know if it was, but it might be. But you know what? In the British parliamentary system, that's the process. Those are the tools that the opposition is given to do its job. If you get held to account and somebody's holding your feet to the fire, you're far more likely to do better legislation.

Let me ask you this question: Why is it that people don't speed on highways when they see a police officer going by? The fear of being caught. The only reason that people don't speed on highways is when they think they're going to be caught. That's the same principle when it comes to legislation and time allocation and the right of the opposition to hold the government to account. If the government knows that it's going to be held to account by a strong opposition, if they know there is going to be clear transparency in the legislative process, guess what the legislation is going to look like? It'll be a heck of a lot better than what we're doing today.

I see bills come through this House, and you guys did it, under the Conservatives, and the Liberals have done it in spades in a whole bunch of other bills, where they bring really good ideas forward. They draft a flawed bill, they agree it's flawed when you get to clause-by-clause, but the minister and the bureaucracy say, "No, don't change it, because we'll look politically weak if we change the bill."

I'll give you another one. Do you remember Linda Jeffrey? I can say her name because she's no longer a member either.

Mr. Steve Clark: Her Worship.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Her Worship Linda Jeffrey was Minister of Natural Resources, and there was a section in the far north planning act—I don't remember the details; I'm going to sort of make it a little bit up because I don't remember the details—that said, "The sky shall be blue."

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Just like you normally do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: See there? Like I normally do. Okay, all right; that's fine. You don't get the gist of this whatsoever, then; just keep on doing what you're doing.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, just stay in your world and don't come out again for at least another 10 or 15 minutes.

So, my point is this. There was a—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, if you listened to what he heckled—I don't mind being heckled. You guys can heckle me all you want, but that was just—he missed the whole gist of what the speech is about.

Linda Jeffrey, who was a very well-meaning minister of the crown, brings forward a bill with the good intention of creating a planning mechanism in the far north. You may be opposed to that, you may be in favour of it—it's irrelevant. The bill came forward. There was a section of the bill that said, "The sky shall be blue." I remember reading the act and sitting in committee, and I go, "Jeez, that doesn't mean blue; that means black. It means the sky is going to be black." So I raised the point through committee. I asked a couple of people who came to depute to the committee, "Tell me what your interpretation of that section is." They would say, each and every time, "It's completely opposite to what the government intends."

When we got to clause-by-clause, we proposed amendments to fix it. I didn't like her bill. In fact, I voted against it, but I was at least trying to make it better, so I proposed an amendment. The government was refusing the amendment, so I said, "Okay, I want to ask legal counsel on committee to give me an explanation of what that part of the bill says." They said, "In fact, it's not blue; it's black." The government members were saying, "No, no, no. That person doesn't know what they're talking about." I'm sorry; these are legislative lawyers hired by the committee who are non-partisan and there to assist the committee. So I said, "Okay, fine. Let me call the ministry lawyer up."

I think it was Dianne Corbett who was the ADM who was on committee at the time, who came before—I may have this wrong. Maybe it wasn't Dianne, but it seems to me it was Dianne Corbett. There was a lawyer for the ministry who came forward, and I asked the question, "Tell me what the meaning of that section is, and am I wrong? Is this not what I say it is?" They said, "No, you're right. In fact, you're 100% right." Because they couldn't lie to committee. They understand, as civil servants, if you come before a committee and you knowingly lie, you can be held in contempt. It's like going to court and lying to the judge; we have powers akin to a judge in a court. So I talked to Linda Jeffrey, and she goes, "You know, Gilles, thanks for that. Let me talk to the corner office over there"—remember, Mr. McGuinty—"and I'll get back to you tomorrow." She came back to me, and I'm not going to reveal what she said to me in that conversation because it was said privately, but I can tell you that the bill was not amended. So even when the government knew its own bill was flawed, they didn't amend it because they didn't have to. It was easier for them to leave it flawed than to make the change.

What I'm trying to implore here to the government members is, when you go to your caucus meeting tomorrow, I think you need to have a discussion about where you use time allocation and that you should actually do what the Premier and the House leader were trying to tell us at the beginning of this Parliament: to find ways to work together. Guess what? You're going to find that the opposition is not going to hold everything up. It's quite the opposite. Because of time allocation, the only thing we can now do is talk everything out for six and a half hours and have two hours of debate on time allocation. So of course we're going to debate and we're going to use all the time we can at third reading.

Do you remember third reading back in the days before time allocation, Clerk? There was no such thing. The bill would get called for third reading and nobody would get up to debate because it would be in agreement. Now, we talk everything out at third reading.

Time allocation doesn't help to get your agenda forward. It just creates flawed legislation and frustrates the process. I will argue that you will find that if the House leader had been serious about what he was proposing, and he had to understand if he put forward—was it six bills, Steve? I think it was six.

Mr. Steve Clark: It started as four, then five, then six, and now it's seven.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, it kept on going. Now it's seven. But if the government would have come to us and said, "Here are seven, and this is what we want"—we may not have agreed to the seven; we may not have given you fast passage on all seven. We might have given you fast passage on four or five. The Conservatives might have said, "This bill is something that we're interested in, and we want to have some hearings," and New Democrats probably would have said the same thing. And, yes, guess what? You may have had to travel a couple of bills. And the member from Ottawa—

Mr. Steve Clark: South.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—Ottawa South and I might have been on committee somewhere in Ontario in the inter-session in February or January. We might have gotten to know each other a little bit better. We may have been able to engage stakeholders on the bill at hand. We might have even agreed on some amendments to make the bill better. I may still vote against your bill, but it's in my interest to make it better. I've never known a member of the opposition, no matter what side of the House I'm on, who goes in and decides that they're going to try to make the bill worse. Our expression is voting "yea" or "nay." Our job as legislators is to try to make the bill work.

So I encourage you: Go to your caucus meeting—if not tomorrow, next week—and have a discussion with your House leader and your Premier about really trying to find a way not to use time allocation, because you are not serving your own interests by doing so. I'll tell you, every time you use time allocation, we will speak six and a half hours to every bill, we will speak two hours to every time allocation motion, and we will speak as long as we can at third reading. And yes, we might even ring

bells. Who knows? I am not big on that. Steve and I are not bell ringers, I always thought, but I'm just saying—they're the only tools we've got. But if you actually did what this Legislature used to do years ago, and you didn't use time allocation, you might find, if you tried that, a much different result in this place. You'd probably find that members are more willing to work together than you think.

I spoke on delegated authorities. I don't have to say anything else on that, but I urge you to have that discussion. Who knows? Maybe one day, discussion will be had in this Legislature about how we can actually do what we're sent here to do, and that is to give bills proper scrutiny, to allow the government to get it in the end, but in the meantime to give it the proper scrutiny so that bills get what it is that they need to make them actually work in the end.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to speak for a bit of time on Bill 8. I know there is very little time to talk about issues of oversight and transparency and accountability, especially in the context of the past 11 years, where we have seen quite a shopping list of very, very significant, very high-profile scandals: most recently the MaRS building; Ornge air ambulance, as has been mentioned today; and the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. I make reference to Caledonia. I consider that the mother of all scandals over the past eight and a half years. That's a particular issue that has now had four books written about it. Obviously, there's something going on down in Caledonia; four books have been published on that particular issue. We've yet to see an inquiry on Caledonia.

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Of course, we can go back even further to the OLG and the eHealth scandal.

Many people ask me what happened in the last election. Normally, with a scandal-ridden tenure of this nature, a government would be voted out. That's one option. Another option would be for this government to clean things up a bit. But with the recent MaRS debacle, we really don't see any change in ways, in spite of legislation like Bill 8. It's titled the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. It's a bit of an attempt. It's a bit of a sham, as well, and it really doesn't touch on what is truly required.

The Ornge air ambulance scandal—an issue of that magnitude, several times over and very recently. We in opposition have called for the minister responsible to resign. That did not happen. I'm surprised this doesn't happen under this present government, under our system of responsible government that goes back something like 160 or 170 years, where those in charge do step down. This hasn't been happening in the last 11 years.

I sat on the Ornge air ambulance committee, the Auditor General's committee. Issues of oversight, lack of transparency, lack of oversight and lack of accountability came up again and again. The red flags were not being

paid attention to. The warnings were being ignored. There is a lot of meat in the report that we brought forward. We brought it forward before the election. It didn't see the light of day until just a few weeks ago, for obvious reasons.

The MaRS building, just a few hundred yards in front of this building—the government had been warned that the market was changing.

The Pan Am Games: a \$1.4-billion budget, but they don't include the \$700 million for the athletes' village.

The Mississauga and Oakville gas plant issue came in, according to the Auditor General, with a \$1.1-billion price tag.

Again, we've just had a financial statement. We're discussing now issues, again, as we should be, of the deficit and the debt and spending by this government. If you add up the cost of Caledonia, eHealth, Ornge air ambulance and the gas plant scandal, it really is an affront to any discussion here of fiscal responsibility within this government.

One other thing I do want to touch on—again, there's such limited time, and I know the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has some important things that he wants to say. But here we are talking about oversight, talking about transparency and talking about lack of management, essentially. The last 11 years have put us on this track of discussion, and it has taken away from subjects we should be talking about, like streamlining government and finding some of the savings that this government needs to find if they are going to balance the books in fiscal year 2017-18, in spite of what Don Drummond says. Why are we not talking about restructuring and downsizing and privatization of some of the services? Because of what has gone on, we are now discussing lack of oversight, lack of transparency and lack of accountability, partly to be addressed by this legislation, Bill 8.

I made mention of the Auditor General. The Auditor General is limited in many ways. For example, with Ornge air ambulance, the people in charge of that boondoggle created a list of arm's-length organizations. I'm not even sure if they're mentioned in our report, because the Auditor General is not allowed to take a look at some of these spinoff companies from the Ornge air ambulance organization.

There's another organization the Auditor General cannot take a look at. There's no oversight. There's obviously no transparency or accountability as far as the Auditor General's book of business. That's Tarion Corp. I know that Norm Miller, the member for the Muskoka area, brought forward a private member's bill just before the election dealing with these companies that we can't take a look at and also dealing with Tarion Corp.

We know that, by and large, there are very good builders in Ontario. The home builders in my area—I know many of them. I built my own home; they're maybe not too happy about that. They do a good job. But there is the occasional marginal builder, the poor builder.

They're supervised by Tarion, which has been around for something like 38 years, but the Auditor General

can't take a look at Tarion unless this Legislature were to agree to give our Auditor General permission to do that.

Many of our MPPs have been contacted by a group called Canadians for Properly Built Homes. They've been on this Tarion file for quite a while now. There are a number of concerns. They feel it's well overdue for some updates. They can't get the information they need, as the Auditor General cannot. They would like to see more information made public about home builders' performance records. Canadians for Properly Built Homes have concerns about the governance of Tarion, concerns about the licensing of some of the marginal builders that I mentioned, and they are, obviously, concerned about the quality of housing—technical standards, for example—in the province of Ontario.

A number of MPPs have worked on this Tarion issue. Former MPP Ted Chudleigh voiced his concerns with respect to HVAC—heating, ventilation and air conditioning—issues as far as design and construction. I know that former MPP Frank Klees did a lot of work on an extensive file from Dr. Earl Shuman; it's known as the Shuman Test fraud. That has been a 16- or maybe 17-year-old battle now. I know that former MPP Rob Milligan worked on that as well. Randy Hillier put forward motion 50 to permit a value-for-money audit of Tarion by the Auditor General, again in the interests of consumer protection. But again, this government, through the Auditor General, cannot take a look at Tarion. The way it was originally structured 38 years ago, there's no room for transparency or accountability.

MPP Todd Smith, among many, had been circulating petitions calling for a value-for-money audit.

Just before the election, I had tenure as critic for consumer services. I put forward a formal order paper question—that would be about a year ago, last December—asking the Ministry of Consumer Services when it will conduct a value-for-money audit of the Tarion Warranty Corp., again, in the interests of transparency, oversight, accountability and the governance of this particular corporation.

Things aren't happening, Speaker. We have legislation here with words like “transparency” and “accountability” in the title. I feel it doesn't go nearly far enough. There's an awful lot of work to be done.

I think I'll end here now because there's so little time to continue this discussion. I would certainly like to hear from my colleagues this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand up in this House. I wouldn't say it's a pleasure to stand up for a time allocation motion.

I would like to talk about a couple of things today. The first is, it's a contradiction to want to time-allocate a bill on transparency. Basically, you're saying, “We want to let you talk about it, but not for very long.” Really, if you're working on a bill about transparency, and if you're really, truly a government committed to openness and transparency, you would want to get as much on the

table—as opposed to as little on the table—as possible. So it's a contradiction.

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I'd like to follow up on something that my House leader said. I don't have the institutional memory of this place that some of the other people do, because I've only been here three years. Some of the things he said about committee work—committee work is very important, but getting committees out in the province, I think, is even more important. This bill, again, restricts the committees to here: instead of the province, an insular vacuum of one specific spot in the province.

In my three years here, I've only had the opportunity to be on one; I got subbed in on one committee. It was the LHIN review, and I've mentioned it here before. One of the places we went was Kingston, and we went to Vankleek Hill. The people in Vankleek Hill are probably still talking about that.

In that short time that I was subbed in, not only did I build relationships that I wouldn't have had before; I also understood parts about the province that I never would have gotten the opportunity to unless we had been on that trip. By this continuous time allocation and saying, “Well, we have committee presentations. They have to be here, or we can do them by Skype, or we can do them on the telephone”—because we don't have Skype, really. Where I'm from, a lot of us don't have high-speed Internet.

I think, really, for this government—for any government—to truly understand the province, a few committees should travel to places where they don't have high-speed Internet. It would make a difference. For me, it makes a lot of difference when I go to places I've never been. I have a much better appreciation of the issues that are happening in Toronto since I've lived part-time in Toronto for the last three years. It has made a huge difference in my outlook on this province.

But by this government declaring they're open and transparent but, “We only want to talk to people who have the ability to get to Toronto”—that's wrong. It's wrong-headed, and it's not a sign that you truly believe in openness and transparency, despite what the bill's title is.

I'm not going to dwell on some of these, but in the three years I've been here, we've spent more time chasing after facts on the Ornge scandal, on the gas plants scandal. The House leader said that in the last Parliament, the people of Ontario said they were sick of the games that the other parties were playing. Well, I hate to tell you this, but it takes two sides to play a game. Although we never supported bell-ringing, the reason that the opposition was having to use every tool in their arsenal was to chase after the lack of openness. I don't think it has changed, despite what this bill says.

I will give you an example. With the MaRS—and I don't know if it's a scandal. I'm still waiting for the information. From what I understand, the government gave a company a loan and changed the regulations so this company could get the loan. We're asking for the business case. Why did you do that? Why did you change

the regulations to give a company a loan that normally a private company wouldn't get? And we're still waiting. We're still waiting. We've got all kinds of documents, but we're still waiting for an open and transparent business case.

I'll give you an example in my riding. I'm still waiting for this answer. The Minister of Infrastructure is working with me. I'll give him credit; he's working with me. I'll give you my business case.

The town of Kirkland Lake needs to build a new swimming pool. It has young families. They've come to work in the mines. They've got young kids. There are not a lot of other services in the immediate area. They need a new swimming pool. They applied to Infrastructure Ontario for a loan—the same Infrastructure Ontario that gave MaRS a 200-and-some-million-dollar loan. They applied for a loan of \$7.5 million. They were refused. Why? They were refused because in the last year they ran a deficit. They ran a deficit of about half a million dollars. That's why they were refused.

My approach to the minister, and my business case, is that they ran that deficit because the MPAC assessment on their two major employers was challenged, and they were forced to pay back half a million dollars from a faulty MPAC assessment to those employers.

Further to my business case, the Minister of Finance has acknowledged in this House that there are problems with MPAC. They've done a study. They've asked for a full review of MPAC, because there have been problems specifically in one-resource towns like Kirkland Lake. There's my business case.

I've asked the Minister of Infrastructure to look into that, to see if we can change that decision, because the town had no control over a faulty MPAC ruling that forced them to pay back half a million dollars that caused a deficit. There's my business case—open and transparent. I'm still waiting for the answer. That's a business case.

We're still waiting for the answer on MaRS. That's why we question whether the government is truly interested in accountability and transparency. If they were, they would travel and talk about what transparency means.

I've said in this House before, and I'm likely going to say again, as long as the people in Timiskaming–Cochrane feel fit to have me speak on their behalf: This government—and maybe governments before, because I've only had experience with this one—is really good at picking the right title and then crunching a bunch of other things in there, but focusing on the title. Who wouldn't want more MPP accountability and transparency and more public sector accountability? Of course, everybody wants that.

Even the Liberal House leader, in his opening remarks, mentioned that my colleague the member for Timmins–James Bay had said, “We support some of the things in here—maybe most of the things.” But that's the problem with an omnibus bill. You put a few good things in, and then you slip in a few that aren't so good.

Interjection: A poison pill.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. But it's great: You can run around and say, “Look, we've put this bill forward. We're all about accountability and transparency. How could these people want to delay this? It's all sunshine and rose petals.” But it's not.

Like the member from Timmins–James Bay said, if we actually had the time and the will from the governing side, maybe we could put in a few amendments that would make this bill a little bit less egregious in the areas where it is egregious.

There are areas in this bill that are not going to do what the people think. When I look at the title, and if I didn't follow politics that closely, I would think they're turning over a new leaf. This is the promise. I believe I heard in the financial statement today that if this bill was passed, it's one of these things in turning over a new leaf to make the government much more—this is a whole new open and transparent government.

1520

If it was, they wouldn't have to time-allocate this bill. Also, the opposition wouldn't have to do things that are oppositional if the government actually answered questions.

Again, I'll use my Kirkland Lake case. I'm waiting for the answer, and if the answer is no, well, I've done my job on behalf of my constituents. I've had good relations with the minister. I fully expect he will give me an answer.

But when we don't get an answer, when we get, “Oh, but we've released 700 documents and we've released this and we've released that,” that's not really an answer. Flooding people with a bunch of information but actually not pointing out where the information came from would be like when I went to school—the teacher asks me a question and I throw the textbook on the table. I say, “Teacher, it's in there somewhere. I know what I'm doing.” That's what they're doing. They are throwing a textbook on the table, they are throwing the manual on the table, saying, “There's your answer.” We didn't ask for 1,000 documents. We asked for an answer, and this bill is not helping with that process. That's what I find most disappointing.

Are there good things in this bill? Yes. But it's not getting at the root problem that we're having with this government and that we continue to have with the new Wynne government. They're failing at this point to answer basic questions. It wouldn't be a scandal if you answered the question. You develop scandals when you try to hide things, and that's the problem.

It's been a pleasure to be able to express my views and advocate on behalf of the people of Kirkland Lake, who really need a swimming pool.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak today on this bill. I've heard a number of speakers in here today, and I think we're all relatively consistent that it's a bit ironic—“contradictory,” I think, is the word that one of

the other members used—to state that this government is bringing in a transparency and accountability act, and yet they're time-allocating it. It really does speak to the height of the hypocrisy of what this government is doing. When I'm out in my riding, what people are talking to me about—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdrawn, Speaker.

They're concerned and feeling betrayed with the conduct of this Liberal government, and certainly the new Premier as much as the last Premier. We heard things in the past, and my former colleague Frank Klees from Newmarket–Aurora brought out a lot of concerns in regard to the Ornge boondoggle that we've heard a lot about in here. Nothing really happened under that watch. Yes, they changed some people in the deck chairs and they tried to make the public feel good that we've moved some people out and we've moved some new people in. But what they didn't do was step up, in the spirit of accountability and transparency, and truly allow us to get to the truth on that matter.

It was the hope, with the new Premier coming in, that you would have a new flavour and a new way of doing business. Sadly, Premier Wynne has again really just fallen lockstep into the old way of doing things.

Again, this bill really is transparent in the fact that it says one thing and does the other. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville spoke earlier, and I think his words were that they talk out of both sides of their mouths. In particular, he was very specific to the House leader for the Liberals, that they're behind closed doors having a discussion, and then the next thing you know, it's the exact opposite of what they have agreed to. It's a sad situation that we find ourselves in, and we can't continue to allow them to say one thing and do another. They've run this province into the ground.

As we've heard in here earlier—I think my colleague Vic Fedeli from North Bay–Nipissing suggested it during his response to the economic update today—they are continually saying one thing and doing another. They haven't stepped up and agreed that they've tripled the debt and that we are in dire financial circumstances; we need to turn this province around, and we need to do that sooner than later.

Last week in this House—or two weeks ago, I guess it was, since we were in a consti week last week—I, again similar to my colleague Mr. Klees from Newmarket–Aurora, asked for the Deputy Premier's resignation, and I don't do that lightly. She's one of 107 of us who is duly elected, a long-standing member of this Legislature, but at the end of the day people died under her watch and the expectation would be that if you truly want to be accountable and transparent, then you have to step up and show action—not just words and rhetoric, you actually have to show action.

I'm saddened that I had to do that, but I think that is the role of opposition. It's the role of myself on behalf of Ontarians to expect our government, especially our

senior leaders: our Premier, our Deputy Premier and cabinet ministers, to step beyond the bar—not lower the bar, not make it acceptable for these things and just try to sweep them under the carpet. We need to ensure that people are going to step up and show accountability and transparency. That's what leadership is about. Our next generation—those pages sitting in front of you—need to see a role model.

I'm concerned that sometimes this Liberal Party opposite seems to want to bring in a bill and pretend that legislation can change the world just with the stroke of a pen and putting a few words on paper. That's not what it is, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe ethics can be legislated. There need to be very stringent accountability measures and they need to then take action when those measures are not met. What I have seen from this Liberal government in my three years is that that has not happened. We have things like eHealth, Ornge, the gas plant scandal—and I'm going to talk about those a little bit more in a few minutes. When you have that those types of boondoggles, the worst boondoggles and scandals in our provincial history, yet you still have all of your cabinet ministers in place—no one has actually resigned or been forced to resign or, more importantly, should have stepped down of their own volition when these types of things happen under their watch to show the spirit of accountability and transparency—it then becomes just a piece of paper that I believe isn't really worth the paper it's written on.

It's interesting that one of the schedules in the amendments to the Ambulance Act says that this bill would provide whistle-blower protection for persons who disclose information to an inspector, investigator, special investigator or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In the Ornge file again, we had people who came forward, wrote letters and said, “We have some very significant concerns,” and those were just brushed aside. They were swept under the carpet. It saddens me that we're in a situation like that.

It's interesting again that I think this bill arrives at a time when this 11-year-old Liberal government in Ontario presides over the least open and the least transparent government in the history of the province. I'm going to speak about three or four specific items, Mr. Speaker.

One that was just brought up today by our member from Lanark—I don't know the other three, but he's got quite a handle there—Randy Hillier. He talked about MaRS. This is yet again another boondoggle that's unfolding which, ironically, didn't come out until after the provincial election where people would have known that they are again wasting millions and millions of dollars that now aren't going to be going to the front line of our health care, our schools and our most impoverished people in our province—\$450,000 in monthly loan interest payments for an empty, downtown Toronto space.

I have people coming into my office every single day looking for services that they need for their loved ones, for those less fortunate, and every day it's a challenge because we know we're spending this kind of money. This government has presided over, in their 11 years, the

highest debt and deficit in our provincial history. People out there need to be aware that the only two ministries within government that actually have more money spent are education and health care—we're spending more on the provincial debt per month than we do in the social services ministry that I'm given the privilege of being the critic for. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, and it gives me no pride in saying this, there's a lot to criticize in that whole ministry. We're not getting to the front lines. We're not helping the people most in need.

Ornge, as I've spoken about in this House a couple of times, is absolutely a sham. We've seen it over and over. There's \$9.3 million in compensation to Chris Mazza, the CEO. We've got shell companies out there that we can't even have the Auditor General check out because they've hidden these things behind the legislation and the regulations to prevent us from looking in and truly getting to the truth—the accountability and the transparency. If they were truly sincere in those two words, they would have brought that information out.

What I want to ask today in this House—and I will ask it whenever I get the opportunity again—particularly to the President of the Treasury Board and Deputy Premier is, the Ornge report was tabled in this House. I want to know what actions they're actually going to implement to prevent this from ever happening with any of our inner agencies again, so that money truly is being used on the front lines, providing the care and services that the great people of Ontario deserve.

I want to understand how they're going to ensure that oversight and accountability will be built into any new agreements going down the road so that this can never happen again because we've wasted millions and millions of dollars that are not going to the front lines as they so deserve.

1530

EHealth, again, a billion dollars wasted on tendered contracts to high-priced consultants—upwards of \$3,000 a day to a consultant who then turned around and billed us outrageous expenses. These things cannot just be, “Well, sorry, but we'll get better.” I hear in this House all the time, “We need to do better. We will do better,” but every time I turn around there's another one of these appearing in front of this Legislature under the watch of this Liberal government. It's just not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. We need to show true transparency and accountability, but that takes people to step up and do the right thing.

I'm going to go to one that's very near and dear to me. I think it's the height of hypocrisy, really, when you think about the intent of this and the wording. I think Mr. Vanthof mentioned that words are pretty hollow when you just put a title on it but you really don't stand behind it. Some \$1.1 billion was wasted to shut down those two gas plants and save four Liberal seats.

This government has allowed deleted emails to go unsearched. There's no recrimination for that. There is nobody who has paid the price for that. There are currently two OPP investigations—unprecedented in provincial

history. This is just unacceptable, and the height of hypocrisy. The only two people who we believe really know—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry. Once again, I have to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary word that he just used.

Mr. Bill Walker: My apology, Mr. Speaker. If I used the word “contradictory,” would that be acceptable?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): You have to stand up and withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

I'll use “contradictory,” Mr. Speaker. I do apologize; I wasn't really understanding what you were asking me.

But you can't speak out of both sides of your mouth. You can't say one thing and do the exact opposite and expect the people of Ontario to truly believe what you're saying. We have knowledge that Peter Faist and Laura Miller were the two people most implicitly involved in the scandal that is the gas plants. We wanted them to come in front of the committee to be able to share their true knowledge, so that we can get to the bottom of that, so that we can actually put provisions in place so that something like the gas-plant billion-dollar boondoggle, which once again has produced nothing for the great people of Ontario, and has in fact taken a billion dollars off the table from those most critical services that we provide to the most needy in our province—I think it's just unfathomable that this government would hide behind that.

We asked for them to be able to be called, and they denied that ability for them to appear in front of us. How transparent and accountable is that? Again, you can't put a bill on the table saying, “We're going to legislate ethics,” and then—your actions speak way louder, voluminously louder, when you shut that down.

Similarly, they're shutting down debate on this bill itself, the accountability and transparency act bill. They're actually time-allocating it. They're shutting down proper, rigorous debate on that, so again, it's a little tough for me to stand here and really feel that I have a comfort level that they're truly going to turn the page. I was hopeful, with the new administration coming in under Premier Wynne, that we were going to see a different government, and sadly I'm not seeing that. I'm seeing more of the same. If I go back to my roots, to Groundhog Day: It's the same old thing, day after day, except the spin that will be different: “We need to do better. We will do better,” and then we go right back through the whole thing again.

Bringing a bill like this in again really challenges my thought process as to how sincere they really are to the people of Ontario. It almost feels like they're mocking the Ontario public at times. “We've got power,” they keep saying; “We've got the majority.” Yes, we respect that; the people of Ontario did speak, but they didn't give you a majority to do the same old things over and over again, and to bring bills like accountability and transparency and not truly stand behind those words. This government is truly the epitome of waste and scandal, so

it's a little bit rich to ask for accountability and transparency when I can cite those four off the top of my head, and those are just the first four that come to mind.

I came to this Parliament to make a difference, so that we certainly could do the best that we can for all Ontarians. I've had the privilege of having the deputy health critic portfolio, children and youth, and now social services, community services, long-term care and wellness. Those people out there on the front lines truly need those services.

I keep coming back to the scandals, the wasted billions and billions of dollars that are not there. People come through my doors in tears—families who are stressing over how they care for their loved ones—and I struggle with how to tell them anything other than that there's a limited amount of money out there because this government is spending so much money on debt and debt-servicing payments. I can't fathom that in their last budget they didn't even acknowledge the need to cut back on their spending.

The economic update today, which I believe I have a copy of on my desk here—this may be considered a prop, but it is their piece of information. One of my colleagues noted that the maple leaf is in red, which is kind of a sad statement, because so is the government in red. We need more accountability to ensure—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: You can't say—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Speaker, this exactly speaks to what I've been saying. They won't even acknowledge that this is the worst period this province has ever experienced in debt and deficit payments. Yet we know it. The people out there in Ontario know it. Certainly, the financial community knows it. That's why we're in dire straits. If we go much further down the road, we will probably go bankrupt, which is a sad state of affairs, particularly for those young pages. Sadly, this government wants to stand behind it. They want to espouse a whole bunch of things, but you know what? Accountability and transparency is stepping up and doing the right things to get this province back on track.

It's a sad state when we see the same things—another bill, if we really want to use an example for transparency and accountability, is Bill 10, the Child Care and Early Years Act. My colleague from Simcoe North, in this House, asked for the government to extend the public consultation period so we could go across the province and truly hear the needs of Ontarians, so then you can actually develop legislation and policy that's truly going to be of benefit for those next generations, for our leaders of the future and for those who we should treat as our most precious resource. What did they do? They time-allocated it and said, "Thanks, but no thanks. We're not going to do that."

Hon. Jeff Leal: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): A point of order: the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: While I have profound respect for my good friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I think we're debating Bill 8 right now, the time allocation debate, as opposed to Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you'll provide some direction on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Yes, we are debating a time allocation motion with respect to Bill 8. I will return to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it just goes to show: I was using that as an exact example of what they're trying to do with Bill 8. They say "transparency and accountability," but at the end of the day, they have no interest in being transparent and accountable or they would have taken action.

They would have actually put some changes in place that are going to prevent things like Ornge, MaRS and the gas plants from ever, ever happening again. There would have been people, at the end of the day, in those senior leadership positions who would have actually—voluntarily, hopefully, in the first case—stepped down, and if not, the Premier would have stepped up and said, "You know what? This is not acceptable. This is not the highest standard that we can achieve as a government for the people of Ontario, and I expect more out of you." They would have given them at least some time in the penalty box to allow them to reflect and think, "Is that really what I should have done? Is that how we should have handled the situations in my senior leadership?"

It's one of the most important things in this Bill 8 that ministers who fail miserably in their public service duties, and whose inattentiveness leads to future Ornges, have to resign. We need to see something in there so that people are truly going to step up and be held to account.

It's a privilege to be a cabinet minister, as all of the people who have had that great title over the years and the responsibility—but it does come with accountability and responsibility. There needs to be transparency and accountability in every single person, but especially in our Premier and the cabinet ministers.

It doesn't talk about what's going to happen if somebody fails in those, if they don't discharge their duties to the best of their ability, and when we have billions of dollars wasted—that the precious people of Ontario are not getting—as a result of their inability to manage properly.

We want to see this. Certainly, there are lots of amendments. The general intent and the wording were okay, but there are some significant changes that need to be made to hold those governments to account and to be transparent. We'll continue to do that as the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 8. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice, signed by the chief government whip, that this vote should be deferred until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

1540

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It will be my pleasure to talk about Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act—and amending a whole bunch of other things.

Basically, this bill, Bill 21, has three parts to it. It is a collective of two bills that were in the previous Parliament—Bill 178, to ensure that our blood system continued to be a voluntary one; and a second bill that had to do with the diluted chemo drugs and what we should do so that this never happens again—and then a third part, to try to make the Regulated Health Professions Act a little bit more transparent and accountable to the people, like us, it's supposed to protect. I will use my time to deal with all three parts of this bill.

Let's start with the first part, which has to do with voluntary blood donation. I don't want to do a history course, but you have to remember a few things. The first thing is, since November 2012, for the last two years, the province has known that there is a private for-profit agency that wants to open a plasma collection—they're called Canadian Plasma Resources. They want to open in Ontario, and they want to pay donors for their plasma donations. Everybody has known this for two years—two years in a week.

In November 2012, Canadian Plasma Resources applied to Health Canada for a licence to open two plasma collection sites in downtown Toronto. Canadian

Plasma Resources indicated that donors would be paid \$20 per donation of plasma, or if they didn't want to take the \$20, they could make a charitable donation and get a receipt for this amount. This request was done two years ago. Health Canada held consultations on this in April 2012.

A summary of those consultations was available online, for anybody who follows health care matters, since it was posted on July 26, 2013, more than a year and four months ago.

It wasn't until March 20, 2014, that the government of Ontario woke up and realized that this was 100% their responsibility—if we are serious that we want to protect our voluntary blood services, that the government had to act.

But a year and a half had already gone by, and this for-profit company had not sat idle. This for-profit company had rented a beautiful location on Adelaide Street, not far from Queen's Park—actually, not far from the Ministry of Correctional Services, and not far from the Salvation Army hostel either. They opened up another one on Spadina, not far from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. They have spent, I'm told, between \$6 million and \$7 million to retrofit those two sites, to hire all of the staff, to bring all of the equipment in. Well, I may not be the most shrewd business person, but I'm guessing that if somebody is willing to invest over \$6 million in Ontario to open a for-profit paid plasma collection site, it's because they have a pretty good business case and they think this is going to go through.

For an entire year and a half—more than a year and a half—our Ontario government stayed silent. This business set up shop in Ontario, did the investment, and then in March, the minister comes out and puts the bill forward. We all know what happened to that. An election was called and it never saw the light of day. Then we had to wait until July 22 this year, when the same bill was reintroduced—and I will speak to this, because when it was first presented, I stood up in this House and pointed out that there were areas of concern with this bill, areas of concern that should have been addressed. But no, they reintroduced the same thing: cut, paste, voilà. It's now called Bill 21. It has the same mistakes that the first bill had, and it got reintroduced. That was in July. Everybody knows that we are now at November 17, and we're just going through with second reading.

There is urgency to this bill, Speaker. There is a \$6-million urgency to this bill, because right now, there's a business that has set up shop in Toronto, with plans for Hamilton, to start paying donors for plasma collection.

We hopefully all remember a bit about the Krever commission. We all remember a bit about the thousands of people who died and what we've learned from this. It was a very expensive process when the Krever commission came to town and delivered its recommendations.

What were the key recommendations from the Krever commission? Blood is a public resource, donors should

not be paid, sufficient blood should be collected so that importation from other countries is not necessary, access to blood and blood products should be free and universal, and the safety of the blood system is paramount.

After years of this inquiry, after tens of thousands of people and families affected by this tragedy, we said, "Never again." We said that we had learned our lesson and that we owe it to everybody who lives in this province and in this country that we will never put their blood system at risk again. But now, for the last two years, this company is there. This company has set up shop a couple of blocks down. Feel free to go and have a look. Feel free to go on their website and register to be a donor, because it's all happening here, right now, in Ontario.

We've had so many groups come forward that say, "We need to make sure our blood collection stays voluntary." This is consistent with the World Health Organization's position that the safest blood is where donors are voluntary, non-remunerated and from low-risk populations. It would ensure that we have learned our lesson from the Krever commission on the hazards caused by treating blood as a commodity for the many Ontarians who died or are currently still suffering from the tainted blood scandal.

Actually, to drive the point home, we had a theatre group that came all the way to Queen's Park. They did a play called Tainted. They were here at Queen's Park on Monday, October 27, and they presented a play that was extremely powerful that took us, through the eyes of a family, through discovering HIV and AIDS, through the infection of thousands of people who did not know they were getting infected, through our blood system that failed them on so, so many levels, through the Krever commission and through their recommendations.

1550

This theatre group came here to Queen's Park. I went and saw the play. It was right here at Queen's Park; it was pretty easy to do. I'm really sad to say that there was not one representative of the Liberal government who came to see the play. There was not one representative who cared to remember the lessons of the Krever commission and those people who came to help us remember what we had learned.

We also have to realize that we have presently Canadian Blood Services. They have been in place since the Krever commission's recommendations, where the Red Cross stopped collecting blood and blood products and the responsibility was given to a brand new agency. The brand new agency was going to be there to learn the lessons of the past and to make sure that we protect everyone; that's Canadian Blood Services.

Ontario is the biggest contributor to Canadian Blood Services. So if there is anything that we are not happy about, we carry a pretty big stick. We pay for Canadian Blood Services. Ontario is the biggest contributor to the budget of Canadian Blood Services. If we are not happy with the number of units of blood and plasma and blood products that they collect, that they process, that they put forward, why don't we speak up?

I've had many conversations with Canadian Blood Services. They haven't heard a peep from the Ontario government. They figure, like everybody else, if you don't hear a peep, it's because you're doing a pretty good job. If they are doing a pretty good job, then why do we need new people to come and collect and, by paying their donors, put at risk our not-for-profit volunteer-driven collection system that we have here in Ontario and here in Canada?

Quebec understood the lessons quite quickly. They passed a bill. Héma-Québec is now the only one that can collect blood in Quebec, and they are not allowed to pay donors.

Sometimes people come—yes, there is a program in Winnipeg; it has been there since before the blood scandals. It pays donors of very, very rare blood types. It is a tiny, weeny little program that needs to be there. This is not the bread-and-butter stuff that we're talking about when we're talking about Canadian Plasma Resources. Canadian Plasma Resources has the intention of dealing in hundreds and thousands of units. The tiny, weeny little program in Winnipeg that pays donors pays donors because those donors have been identified throughout Canada with very rare blood types. They collect dozens, at the most, of units of blood and plasma, not hundreds and thousands. So this is sort of a red herring that we hear about.

We also hear things like, "Oh well, 70% of the plasma comes from the States." We heard this in this House, that 70% of the plasma comes from the States. This is not true, Speaker. It's fraction products from plasma that are imported from the States, mainly IVIG. This is something that we do not manufacture in Ontario or in Canada. There are only very few places on earth that do that kind of work—three labs that I know of.

Sure, we get some of those plasma products from those three labs, but we are self-sufficient in plasma. We do not import fresh or frozen plasma from anywhere. We get the plasma we need to treat the people who are sick in Ontario from volunteers who donate their plasma freely to help their fellow human beings. This is how we make sure that our system is safe. This is how we make sure that the people who receive the treatment where plasma is needed receive safe blood products. It's as simple as that.

So to say, "Oh, 70% of plasma is coming from the States." This is not true. These are fraction products of plasma that come from those specialized labs that do not exist in Ontario or Canada that are being imported—no fresh plasma, no frozen plasma. So this question, I hope, will be clear.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Safe plasma.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Safe plasma.

There are changes happening with the Canadian Blood Services, a not-for-profit agency funded—the biggest funder being the province of Ontario. Things are changing. I can tell you that there used to be a plasma collection program in Sudbury. I know this because I was a donor for years. For years, every Wednesday on my

lunchtime I went down and donated plasma. When you're a plasma donor, you can donate every week. So every Wednesday at lunch I met the same people sitting there, donating plasma. I no longer can do this, because it was decided that the plasma collection was going to be moved to Thunder Bay, for reasons unknown to me. And Thunder Bay was set up to collect about 10,000 units. But for reasons unknown, the Thunder Bay site has also been closed.

There are changes happening within the Canadian Blood Services system, changes that are not really in line with continuing to be self-sufficient. We have a government, and certainly a Minister of Health, that will be more than happy to tell everybody who listens, or not, that he wants to make sure that blood services continue to be on a voluntary basis. He wants to make sure that he does the right thing to protect the health of Ontarians. He says all of the right things, but he doesn't act. He is the Minister of Health; he is the one who transferred millions of dollars to Canadian Blood Services, but yet he doesn't put any oversight or accountability to make sure that we continue to have this.

We had, this fall, quite recently—just before Thanksgiving, actually—a call from Canadian Blood Services that said we were at the lowest level of units since 2008, and a call was put out there. I can tell you that people came to me and said, “France, we really tried to answer the call, but the phone lines were always busy. We couldn't even get through to get an appointment.” I said, “Oh, well, that's sort of weird. We'll bring your concerns forward.” Then I noticed that they were not the only ones.

The government has a responsibility through the millions of dollars that they invest to make sure that the system works. If we have a system that doesn't meet our needs, of course people are going to want something different, of course people are going to start looking at anything and everything. We have a good system in Canada. It needs oversight—

Interruption.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oh, that's never good.

Interjection: Arrest her.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, yes, yes. I'm about to be arrested. Sorry about this. We're not allowed to have our phones on when we're in here. I'm usually very diligent in doing this, but today I slipped, and I'm truly sorry.

So coming back: We have a voluntary blood donation system. We have a strong, not-for-profit agency that exists. There are some changes going on. Let's make sure that the will of the people is heard, that the lessons of the Krever commission are respected and that we continue forward with a system where everybody who donates does so voluntarily from the goodness of their heart to help their fellow citizen. This is how we will succeed.

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I think this is what the government wants to do, and I think the bill that is in front of us has the possibility to do this. Let's move on with it. It has been two years. This is way too long. That was part 1 of Bill 21.

Part 2 of Bill 21 is a series of amendments to statutes regarding pharmacies. Here again, I want to put it into a little bit of perspective. The perspective is that 1,202 people received diluted chemotherapy drugs, most of them in Ontario, a few of them in New Brunswick. All of those diluted chemotherapy drugs came from a for-profit agency in Hamilton, in southern Ontario.

When that happened, when people found out on March 20, 2013, that 1,202 people had received diluted chemo drugs, they were devastated—themselves, their families, I would say the larger cancer family, as well as our health care system as a whole. How could this happen? How could it be that Ontario, that has such a good health care system, such a good cancer treatment system, could let 1,202 people down? How could we have failed them?

The government agreed to put a select committee together to look into this and give people answers. We were to review the incident and the many questions that the incident had raised, learn from it and make changes so it never happened again. I became a member of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, and we started collecting sworn testimony from April 16, 2013, until the House was dissolved in May 2014. Fifty people were called to testify, some of them more than once. Whether treatments were compromised by the diluted chemo treatments, unfortunately, we still cannot answer. I can tell you that Cancer Care Ontario is certainly trying to answer that question, but it hasn't been answered.

But many other questions were answered by the report that we tabled in April 2014, many questions such as: How could this be? How could this have happened in Ontario? Who made the mistake? How does this all work? Why wasn't it caught sooner? Why did we let 1,202 people go through before we caught on? All of those questions were answered in the report that was tabled with this Legislature.

To refresh your memory, gemcitabine and cyclophosphamide are two chemo drugs that are used to treat different cancers in both children and adults. Those two drugs had always been prepared in the hospital or cancer treatment centre or by the manufacturer of those drugs. In the fall of 2011, the hospital decided to contract this out. Not only did they decide to contract this out; they asked a group purchasing organization called Medbuy to do the contracting for them. Medbuy was not part of the hospital. It was a contractor that would handle the purchasing of this drug from a for-profit company called Marchese, which had won the request for proposals. It was this company, Medbuy, which handled the contract, that made the mistake.

For all of the people in the families who were wondering what happened, here's what happened. Medbuy, the contractor, took a list from the manufacturer of the drugs. They took a list from Baxter. Baxter is the name of the people who manufacture those two chemo drugs. They took the list from Baxter and they put it out for tender. The tender came back. Marchese was the chosen bidder, and they went on and made those drugs. When Baxter

was asked to submit their list, they just submitted the name of the drug. They did not go into detail as to how the drug was to be used. They are the manufacturer. They know exactly how their drugs are to be used. They are the ones who created it, who brought it to market, who manufacture it, and now they were getting it ready for the hospital to use. When this list went out, it did not say that it needed to be done in a specific concentration, which is something that happens with many, many drugs in the hospital. All of the pharmacists who sit at Medbuy, who look into this; the people from Marchese, which is the company that prepared it—all of those people had pharmacists. None of them caught on. None of them were close enough to the patients to have their due diligence triggered to make sure that they were protecting the patient.

What have we learned from this, Speaker? We learned that the further away from the patient you are, the higher the risk to the patient. When somebody prepares a drug for a specific patient, they know that they have to get this right, because if you don't get the right chemotherapy treatment to that patient, some of those drugs are very potent and some of those drugs will kill the patient on the spot. When you're next to that patient, you are very vigilant. But when the hospital contracts out the procurement, who contracts out for the purchasing of those drugs, who then sends those drugs to a list of hospitals that have never dealt with the procurement, that have never dealt with the manufacturer or any of the above, then due diligence is not done.

Due diligence was not done until we had this very keen pharmacy technician at Peterborough Regional Health Centre who noticed that this drug needed to be concentration-specific and that the drugs he had received were not. He is the one who rang the alarm bell. He is the one who exposed what had been going on for over a year and a half, which explained why so many people had already been affected—290 people at Windsor Regional Hospital, 691 people at London Health Sciences Centre, 37 people at Lakeridge Health, and one in Peterborough, the one where it was discovered.

We learned that the contracting out had all sorts of anomalies in it, such as: The contracting-out agency, the purchasing agency, never got paid for their services. They used a kickback on the price of the drugs to pay themselves. Everybody on the committee agrees that this payment method has to go. It is fraught with problems. I'm not allowed to name people, but there are MPPs in this House right now, on the government side, who sat there and spoke in favour of changing this kickback system because it put people at risk, yet this bill has come back and it is not in. It is not in Bill 21, although everybody on the committee agreed that we can't continue like this.

Another thing that didn't sit well with the members of the committee was that when the request for proposal was out, people could offer to basically give money to the company for their educational fund, money that basically could be used as they saw fit, and the more you

gave, the more points were assigned to your company to win the contract. This does not lead to quality; this does not lead to ensuring safety in our health care system. This practice should be outlawed and discontinued.

1610

We all agreed to this—the PCs, the New Democrats, the Liberals. We all heard the stories. We all saw the worries in the faces of the people who had been affected, and their families, and we wanted things to change. But it is not in the bill.

Then came those really uncomfortable moments, those moments when you asked the CEO of Medbuy, the purchasing company, things like, “How many of your employees make over \$100,000?” His answer was straightforward: “Oh, perhaps five.” All right. Through lots of trouble, we managed to follow the money and found that—“Oh, look at this”—of the ones we were able to get the salaries for, 17 of them made over \$100,000.

All of that money came from hospitals, which are under the disclosure act, the sunshine list that people know. We know that for everybody who's paid by the government or a transfer payment agency of the government, if you make over \$100,000, your salary becomes public and you're posted online and in newspapers. Everybody knows. But all you have to do is contract out your purchasing department to an outside agency, and then 17 of them made over \$100,000.

I worked in hospitals for a very long time, Speaker. There is nobody who works in purchasing departments who makes \$100,000. You can look on the sunshine list all you want for all 152 hospitals, who all still have a purchasing department, and how many purchasers do you see on the sunshine list? Zero. The people who work in the purchasing departments of hospitals—sure, the head and the VPs and stuff, they make over \$100,000, but not the purchasing agent. Why is it that at Medbuy, 17 of them made over \$100,000?

I knew they didn't want us to know that, because when they came to committee, they lied to us. They told us that it was perhaps five, but the truth of the matter was, after doing a lot of searching, there were 17 of them. They did not want us to know that. They did not want us to know a whole lot of things they were doing.

Of course, when the committee saw that, one of the recommendations we made, and, I think, a recommendation that everybody would agree with, was that those companies, given that they receive 100% of their funding from hospitals, should be covered by the sunshine list. We all agreed; the Liberal members all agreed. I can still remember some of them arguing quite firmly that this has to change; this needs to happen. Those purchasing organizations, given that they do the work of a hospital, that they're 100% paid by hospitals, have to be on the sunshine list. But do you see this in the bill? Nope. It is not in the bill.

We had a very difficult time finding out where the money went. My, oh, my, I spent a lot of nights trying to read through documents and trying to follow the money, because the money comes from the government to the

LHINs to the hospitals to the group purchasing organizations, who do not pay for the purchase of the drugs. The hospital pays for the purchase of the drugs. Part of the money goes back to the purchasing agency as a kickback, which helps itself and then gives some back to the hospital.

Well, it didn't matter. I'm no better and no worse at reading financial statements than anybody else. It didn't matter who came to help us. It is impossible to follow the money.

What do you do when taxpayers' money cannot be followed? You change the rules. You make sure that people have to submit financial statements so that we know where the money goes, so that we can follow the money. It is all fine and good that we don't pay for group purchasing organizations and that they get a kickback, but the people at Medbuy are completely unaccountable. The people at Medbuy told us, "Oh, only five of our employees make over \$100,000," when we could identify 17. I'm almost positive there would have been more than this if we had been allowed to get the documents we wanted.

The same thing with the money that goes back into the hospitals. Now, this money is not labelled as coming from the government. It's their own money that went in a circle. It went to purchase the drugs, kicked back to the purchasing agents, comes back to the hospital as a rebate, and then the hospital does whatever they want with that money, because when the money comes from the government to the hospital, they have to be accountable for that money. They have to submit financial statements, and those financial statements are audited. We are allowed to see. The Auditor General certainly is allowed to go in, and she's pretty good at crunching numbers, let me tell you. We have committees here in this Legislature that are allowed to call them in front of the Legislature so that you can look at their books and hold them accountable. But not that money. All you have to do is send this into the circle where everybody helps themselves to taxpayers' money and then they're free to do as they wish.

The committee was really upset about this. Some of the Liberal members of the committee were really, really upset. I remember one being really red in the face when he saw that. Basically, when you don't know, you assume the worst, so we all assumed that they did with that money things that probably are not the most conducive to good-quality patient care. But we have no proof of that because it was impossible to follow this circle of hell.

So what did we do? In the recommendations we said that if we are serious that we want to change the system, if we are serious that we don't want 1,202 people and families to go through the hell they went through when they found out that they had been given diluted chemo, we put recommendations so that those agencies could be called to this Legislative Assembly, so that our Auditor General could go and audit the books, so that we would make sure. Maybe nothing wrong happened with that money, but when you don't know, you assume the worst.

If they are doing great work that leads to increased patient care within their mandate, we all win, don't we? But we don't know that and we want to know. So we put recommendations in our report so that the Auditor General could go in and investigate, if need be, and so that those agencies could be called in front of the committee of the Legislature if we saw fit.

Are those recommendations in the bill, Speaker?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: No.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, they're not. My colleague is quite astute. She has caught on that none of those recommendations are in the bill. Why not, Speaker? Why not?

When we tabled our report, a lot of people had followed the work of this committee step by step because some of them had lost loved ones during that period of time and were wondering, "Was it because they received the wrong chemo?" Some of them are still alive, wondering, "Did I make myself sick as a dog for three months for nothing because I received the wrong chemo?" and everything else in between. I must say that a lot of those people came and thanked us for our report. They came and thanked us for having been frank, having identified where the mistakes had been made, having been transparent as to the process that was going on that had allowed this mistake to happen, for having called people in front of the committee and asked them to testify under oath. They were very grateful. A lot of thank-yous came forward, a lot of heartfelt thanks came to me and, I'm sure, to every other member of the committee, because they felt good that they knew what had happened. They knew who had made the mistake. They knew how the mistake had happened. They sure would like to know if their own care was compromised. We could not give them that answer, and I'm truly sorry about that. We could certainly give them answers as to what went wrong, and we also gave them reassurance that our recommendations would make sure that it would never happen again. And they thanked us.

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But what do we see in this bill? We see that hospital pharmacies will now be accredited by the College of Pharmacists. In and of itself, it's something good. I'm not opposed to it. Nobody is opposed to the step that is in that bill. But that's not what the people of Ontario want. That's not what those 1,202 families want us to do. What they want us to do is, they want us to set in place changes that will make sure that it never happens again, that we to prove to them that we have learned from our mistakes and that when we make a mistake, we own up to it, we show them what happened, we put recommendations in place, and then we act upon them.

This is what they want us to do, but none of that is in the bill—nothing that I've talked about. We didn't make promises to the people who were affected and their families, but we told them—I told them that I would work as hard as I can to make sure that those changes are implemented and that what your family has gone through, it did not go through in vain; that we would

learn, that our health care system would be better for the people after you, that we would learn from our mistakes, and that we would make changes. But none of this is happening. I feel especially bad for those 1,202 families who expect better than that from us. It's not a high expectation to say, "Don't let that happen again. Don't let something that shakes the confidence of our health care system to the core happen again." But we're not doing it.

The minister has reintroduced a part that was in Dr. Thiessen's report. I have nothing but respect for Dr. Thiessen and his recommendations. To make sure that hospital pharmacies are accredited is a good one, but it will not prevent another diluted chemo drug scandal from happening. It will not prevent families from going through a really, really hard time because the health care system had made a mistake that affected them, had let them down.

We have an opportunity to change this. We have an opportunity to do better. I sure hope that we take it. I think we owe it to them.

That was the first two parts of Bill 21. Let me find it; I'm getting a little bit overwhelmed with papers.

The last part of Bill 21 is another part that is an opportunity to do great work. We are going to change the Regulated Health Professions Act. We are going to make it more transparent and more accountable.

Any of you who has read the newspaper in the last couple of weeks will now know that we have a Regulated Health Professions Act, because it has been on the front page of the paper for the last month. Why? Well, for all the wrong reasons. Why was it on the front page of the paper? Because Ontarians got serious infections from private for-profit clinics. Some suffered very serious illnesses, and some have died. All of this happened in an accredited private clinic, and none of this was made available to anybody. None of this was made available till the newspaper put it on the front page of their paper. I will thank Theresa Boyle, the health reporter who, on Sunday, October 5, had done her work and got an interview with the Minister of Health. He said: "It is clear that our system must become more transparent, and that if clinics have had problems with infection control and whether patients have suffered illnesses or died, Ontarians need to know."

I'm quoting again: "'I see my top priority as minister as protecting the safety and well-being of Ontarians. An important part of that is them having access to information which is going to allow them to make the right decisions for their health and well-being,' he said."

I think he's saying the right things. I kind of like what he's saying, and I'm sure everybody who has been affected likes what he's saying. He goes on to say that he will ask the different colleges to fully disclose information about investigations that they conduct. So he says the right things, and I surely would love for those right things to go from words to actions, but it is not happening.

We have an opportunity here with Bill 21 to make changes, and there are a few small steps that are being

taken that will help. But we had a minister who says that his "top priority as minister" is "protecting the safety and well-being of Ontarians." He has a bill that has an opportunity to do this, that was introduced once before, that I have spoken on once before where I have showed him where you could do better, where you are changing things in the law where your objectives are good but you're creating loopholes where it's not going to work. I've already gone through all this once before. The bill gets reintroduced. It is a cut and paste of the bill we had before. The same loopholes are there. The same shortcomings are there. Does nobody ever learn anything in here?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Groundhog Day.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Groundhog Day, yes, Groundhog Day, except that it's not for good news. In the movie Groundhog Day, he would learn everything; he learned to play the piano and he learned to catch the person who falls out of the tree and all of this. But in this Groundhog Day, we have the exact same cut-and-paste bill with the exact same problems.

I'm not the only one who thinks that there are problems with this bill. The Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario has also asked for changes. The bill at the time was called Bill 117. It has now been cut and pasted into Bill 21 with the same loopholes, the same problems. The federation is the umbrella group of all 26 regulatory colleges; that includes the three transitional colleges that exist in Ontario. Basically, although they support—and so do I—the goal that Bill 21 is trying to do when it comes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, the bill itself is flawed. We knew that it was flawed. We told the minister he was flawed—not him, but the bill was flawed, and he never made any changes.

You have to realize that when it comes to the Regulated Health Professions Act—they supervise all of the colleges of the 26 professions that offer health services in Ontario. All of them exist for one single reason: They exist to protect the people of Ontario. They are there to protect people like you and me. When, in our times of need, we turn to a health care professional who is regulated, we know that they belong to a college that will assure quality and that will protect us. This is the only reason they exist. They don't exist to protect their profession. They don't exist for any other reason than to protect us.

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But they need changes to the law. The law is quite old. It has served us well, but it needs to be updated. It is being updated a tiny wee bit in Bill 21, a few steps, but even those few steps leave big loopholes behind.

I see that the time is really going fast now, isn't it? I will point to a few of them.

One is that there are some people who complain to a college for things that have nothing to do with protecting the public. The nurse who lives next door to me has a dog that barks, and that bothers me. So I call the College of Nurses and tell them, "This nurse really gets on my nerves with her dog. I want to put in a complaint." The

way we have it now, the College of Nurses—or physicians or physiotherapists; every college—must investigate every complaint. That's a huge waste of time and resources. The nurse who doesn't deal with her dog barking has nothing to do with protecting the public in receiving nursing care, but right now they have no choice but to investigate this.

This has to change. It's a waste of resources. They do open the door to changes, but they open the door to changes very, very narrowly and won't act. Most of the colleges would still be stuck with a whole bunch of complaints that have nothing to do with protecting the public.

The other one comes back to what happens with private clinics. You know that more and more services—the hospitals are being told to concentrate on hospital services at the bedside: “If it is not a hospital service at the bedside, it can be downloaded to the community. Let a for-profit clinic in the community go ahead and offer that service. It is not your primary mandate; you can send that to the community.”

More and more physician groups are putting private clinics together. So now we have a change in the bill that says that if a physician—I shouldn't pick on physicians, but will take this one for now, because it's the example I have right in front of me—is under investigation by a hospital to lose their privileges, this information should be shared with their college. Right now, all of this could basically happen and the college would never know. The college wants to know, but they have put the bar so high that all a physician has to do right now is let go of their privileges or limit their practice on their own terms rather than be reported to the college, and the college would never know.

The bill is also written as if physicians only work in hospitals. Now, any of you who have read the papers know that more and more of them work outside of hospitals in community-based clinics. The bill specifically says “hospital”—end of conversation.

So now, sure, a hospital will be able and will have to report some physicians who do wrong and are being investigated by the hospital. Once they meet this very high level of certainty that they have done wrong, they will have to be reported to their college. But if the same practice happens in one of those community-based clinics—if the director of the clinic realizes that one of his nurses or one of his physicians is really incompetent and has made gross mistakes—the same provisions don't apply to them. It only applies to hospitals.

How could it be, in 2014, when we have a Liberal government that says every day of the week that they want to move more services out of hospital and into the community, that they bring forward a bill that assumes that physicians only work in hospitals? How could that be? This is November 2014. How could it be that we still have pieces of legislation in front of us that don't take that into account? I don't understand. We had pointed to that before when the bill was first introduced, but it was never acted upon.

So right now, a hospital must have reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation or the restriction, as the

case may be, is related to the competence, negligence or conduct of the physician. To put those words in the bill narrows it too much. Remember, those people have deep pockets. They can hire a very good team of very expensive lawyers who will argue with the hospital that they did not meet the threshold of competence, negligence or conduct of the physician, because none of those words are defined in the bill, of course, just to make sure that the lawyers stay happy for the rest of their lives. So after a hospital has to defend itself that it did the right thing by calling the college and sharing that information, and it is now brought to court by the physician, with his team of expensive lawyers, and the hospital has to defend itself—spend a ton of money defending themselves, saying they acted as per the purpose of the law—do you figure they will be very enthusiastic to do that again, after they've spent tens of thousands of dollars justifying their decisions? Why don't we make this easier? If we are serious that we want employers to report to the college when something like this is happening, well, let's be serious about it and give them the tools, not give them a bill half-cooked, poorly defined and full of loopholes. That is not going to help anybody.

There are other parts of the bill about appointing a college supervisor. There are parts of the bill that change the confidentiality duty.

I'm looking at the time and I feel really stressed because I won't have enough time to go through it all.

Right now, when a college does its work, it will gather all sorts of information. Sometimes that information needs to be shared. They have learned of a miss in the standard of practice of one of their practitioners, whether it be a nurse, a physio, a dietitian or a physician, and they want to share this with their employer? Well, they're only allowed to do this if that information comes to them during a disciplinary hearing. If that information comes to them at any other time than during disciplinary hearings, they won't be allowed to share that information.

Really, Speaker? This is the bill we have in front of us. The aims of it are good. The bill itself needs some serious work.

Étant donné qu'il me reste juste deux minutes, je veux passer très rapidement sur le projet de loi 21.

Le projet de loi 21 a trois parties. La première partie, c'est de s'assurer que le système de collection de sang et de plasma en Ontario demeure un système bénévole, c'est-à-dire de s'assurer qu'on ne pourra pas payer les gens pour faire un don. C'était la recommandation numéro un de la commission Krever, qui voulait s'assurer que le système qui avait tué et rendu malade des dizaines de milliers de Canadiens avait appris de ses erreurs. La première chose que l'on a appris, c'est pour s'assurer qu'il n'y aura plus jamais personne qui va recevoir du sang ou du plasma contaminé, que l'on s'assure que notre système soit basé sur un système bénévole. Ça, c'est la première partie du projet de loi. Le but du projet de loi, on le soutient à 100 %. Le projet de loi, en lui-même, a des petites failles.

La deuxième partie du projet de loi, c'est tout ce qui s'est passé avec la chimiothérapie diluée. On a eu 1 202

personnes, Ontariens et Ontariennes, qui ont reçu la chimiothérapie diluée.

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Un comité de l'Assemblée législative a été mis en place. Des recommandations sérieuses, pour s'assurer que ce genre de problème ne se répète plus jamais, ont été faites, et aucune de ces recommandations-là ne fait partie du projet de loi. Il faut faire mieux que ça. Il faut s'assurer que les erreurs du passé ne seront pas répétées, et ça, ça veut dire amender le projet de loi.

Dans un troisième temps, on parle de la transparence des collèges qui sont là pour protéger les gens qui reçoivent des soins de santé. On sait que les gens veulent beaucoup plus de transparence. Ils veulent beaucoup plus d'imputabilité de la part des collèges pour s'assurer qu'ils sont bien protégés. Le projet de loi, encore là, a des trous.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Nickel Belt. I congratulate her on using her time very well and very succinctly, and wish her a speedy recovery. I see she's down to one crutch, so we're all happy to see that.

We both agree that the voluntary blood system in Canada and Ontario has to remain. I appreciate her comments. As a matter of fact, Canadian Blood Services is headquartered right in Ottawa South, at the corner of Smythe and Alta Vista.

The bill prohibits directly or indirectly providing payment to any individual in return for giving blood or blood constituents such as plasma; offering to provide payment to any individual in return for giving blood; and expecting payment in return for the giving of blood. So I think that we agree on that, and that's very clearly stated in the bill. I appreciate her support in that regard.

In terms of the measures in the bill that are in response to the diluting of chemotherapy drugs, I did have the opportunity to actually sit in on a couple of—I always end up in committee at report-writing time, and I haven't been around for all the hard work. I concur with some of things that she said. There are some concerns in there when you take a look at that piece of financial oversight. But I think there may be some measures in Bill 8 that will address those concerns in terms of that financial oversight.

I think the bill does go directly to the practice of compounding and mixing and sets a new regimen so that we can better protect and ensure quality in our system.

Again, I thank her very much for her remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to the remarks of the member from Nickel Belt.

It's interesting. We've been talking all week—in fact, since the Legislature has come back and since these bills were being rammed through, and whatever else, by this present government. They keep using terms like

"accountability" and "transparency," all these terms that sound nice on paper, but certainly when we see the bills in front of committee and whatever else, we certainly can see that this government has a different definition of transparency and accountability than, certainly, members on this side of the House.

From what I understand of this bill, with what's going on right now, 70% of the plasma that is used in Ontario comes from the United States. Some 70% of the plasma comes from the United States, and that's where paid donors are used. So here we are, saying that in Ontario, we're not going to use paid donors, and that's fine. But if we have to import this, it's just a double standard here.

I would suspect that this bill is going to be rammed through like the rest of the bills that the government has put forward. We have to be so careful, especially with something like this, and what has happened in the past, that we don't get into a mess like we did before. I would hope the government would see this and understand that we need accountability with these bills, and especially this one, which deals with people's health.

We need to have the proper measures in place to have the right oversight, so that we don't get into these problems that we had before. This is my concern, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad to have some questions and comments with regard to what our critic to the health minister spoke about. She did a great job of explaining how arduous this process was, but it was so important because people's lives are at stake. This, unfortunately—and it's very sad—is not the only example, since many of the new MPPs have been here, where lives have been at stake. Ornge is another example where people's lives are at stake.

Here, we're talking about recommendations that were put forward by a reputable specialist, Dr. Thiessen; measures that could actually shine the light on the problems that happened with this underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. That's what I'm referring to, Speaker.

Over half of those over 1,200 people were in the city of London. It really shook the core of London that people were going in for treatment and had no idea that they weren't getting the proper drug dosage in order to get better.

That's what I'm still questioning: why this government wants to not show transparency when it comes to their bills. It's ironic that we have a bill that we just time-allocated today: Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. Where's the bill for government transparency to the public? That's what I'd like to know, Speaker. Maybe we should actually bring a bill like that so that we can hold this government accountable under legislation and be transparent to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to be able to speak to this particular bill. I have great regard and great

respect for the voluntary blood donation system. As an individual donor, I have been down over 70 times in the course of my life, finding that this was the way I could put my blood to use for accident victims across the province. I've been a regular donor since my 20s. I used to have offices around the corner from the Manulife Centre at Bay and Bloor, and on my lunch hour it was so easy to go in there and do a volunteer donation. Having the blood type O-negative, which all of you know is very rare, I can give my blood to anyone, but if I should need blood, I must get it from an O-negative person.

We're here with a bill which is essentially a pre-emptive strike in order to clarify that the rules in Ontario will be that we will not accept payment for donors to provide blood specimens. This is so important to the integrity of our system.

I had a very good friend who lived next door, whose daughter contracted hepatitis C as a result of a tainted blood transfusion. The rest of her life—now she's under care and having to take special precautions because of the hepatitis C. It happened in a different province, but still, with the blood controls that were in place there, it resulted in some tainted blood.

We're concerned, obviously, that people who are financially disadvantaged might be overly encouraged to donate their blood products in order to receive payment. We're very concerned that that may result in a tainted opportunity, that people won't take due consideration. People who would otherwise be seriously at risk might still, notwithstanding their knowledge that they may be at risk, provide it because there's a financial incentive to do so.

What we're very clear on in this act, pre-emptively, is that in Ontario we will protect the integrity of the system.

I appreciate so much the comments from the member for Nickel Belt. There may be some areas for improvement, and I hope we'll have a chance to direct some of those at committee. Thank you very much for your very reasoned response to the bill, and I look forward to working with you on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's the end of our questions and comments for this round.

I return to the member for Nickel Belt for her reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank the member for Ottawa South, the member for Perth-Wellington, my colleague from London-Fanshawe and the member for Beaches-East York.

The first thing I have to put on the record: We cannot say in this house that 70% of the plasma comes from the States. This is not true. It is fraction products that come from the States. Ontario is self-sufficient in fresh and frozen plasma. Have you ever heard Canadian Blood Services saying, "We need more plasma. We need more donors"? You haven't heard them say this? Because we are self-sufficient. What we import is fragmented. Basically, it's called IVIG that we import. That's the first thing.

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The second thing is, I'm happy to hear that people on the other sides are open to making changes to the bill.

We have a bill in front of us. I hope it will go to committee as fast as we can send it there. It has been two years since Canadian Plasma Resources has let it be known that they were going to open shop. They have spent \$6 million. They are full-fledged ahead wanting to set up this paid-for-donation—it's not donation any more, but paid-for-plasma clinic here on Adelaide and on Spadina. It has to be stopped, and the sooner, the better.

The member from London-Fanshawe is right. We owe the people affected—most of them in and around London—to act upon the recommendations of the committee of this Legislature. We have made good recommendations that brought them relief and that they agree with. Now it's time for us to step up to the plate and act upon them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Ballard assumes ballot item number 21 and M^{me} Lalonde assumes ballot item number 37.

Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to speak further to our government's Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, that would prohibit payments to Ontarians for their blood and plasma and enhance the regulation of hospital pharmacies.

The proposed Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, is a combination of two time-sensitive bills, as the member from Nickel Belt mentioned—we've been waiting for about two years for one piece of this bill—that were previously introduced by then Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews, but which died on the order paper in May 2014.

Our government believes that allowing private clinics to pay individuals for plasma donations would risk the integrity of our voluntary blood donation system, which has been successfully administered for years by a single integrated national blood service.

Canadian Blood Services currently manages the blood and blood product supply in Ontario. Its activities include blood and plasma collection from Ontario donors and the procurement and distribution of plasma and plasma-derived products to Ontario hospitals. Once collected, plasma, a component of blood, can be used in two different ways. It can be used as a direct transfusion to treat patients who are bleeding severely or need plasma to help their blood clot. As the member from Nickel Belt said, Canada is completely self-sufficient in transfusion plasma. Patient demand is met entirely within the country.

Plasma can be manufactured into life-saving drugs, referred to as plasma protein products. These plasma protein products include albumin, used to treat fluid loss in burn and trauma victims, immunoglobulins for infections and immune disorders, and clotting factors for patients with hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. They are critical to the health and well-being of countless people in Ontario.

Canadian Blood Services procures plasma protein products in several different ways. The organization collects plasma donations from Canadians. It also purchases additional recovered plasma in the United States from volunteer donors in not-for-profit blood centres licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration and sends this collected plasma for manufacturing into plasma protein products. These products are then redistributed to Canadian hospitals through Canadian Blood Services.

Canadian Blood Services also directly purchases plasma protein products on the international market for distribution to Canadian hospitals.

The introduction of private, for-profit plasma donation clinics in Ontario would alter the blood system currently in place in the province. In early 2014, the former minister wrote to her provincial and territorial counterparts, encouraging them to take a pan-Canadian approach to opposing paid plasma collection anywhere in the country.

Speaker, the current situation in other Canadian jurisdictions is as follows: There is one private plasma clinic in Winnipeg which provides compensation for plasma donations. The practice is not prohibited under Manitoba law. Again, as the member opposite mentioned, it is for very specialized products. Quebec's civil code prohibits paying donors for blood and plasma, although it is permissible to pay an indemnity as compensation for the inconvenience suffered when blood is given for research purposes.

Buying and selling organs, tissues and body parts is prohibited in all provinces and territories. This policy has broad support across Ontario.

Whether other jurisdictions follow our lead or not, Ontario's position remains crystal clear: We stand firmly against payment for blood and plasma donations.

The new statute proposed in Bill 178 was reintroduced on July 22, 2014, with minor changes, as schedule 1 to the proposed Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. Schedule 1 to Bill 21, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014, differs from its previous iteration in Bill 178 in that it contains certain changes that were incorporated in response to stakeholder input and legal recommendations relating to enforcement.

Schedule 1 of Bill 21 would, if passed, create prohibitions against directly or indirectly providing payment to any individual in return for giving blood or blood constituents such as plasma, offering to provide a payment to any individual in return for giving blood, and accepting payment in return for the giving of blood. Schedule 1 would also exempt Canadian Blood Services and its donors from these prohibitions, so that Canadian Blood Services would not be prevented from paying donors if Canadian Blood Services, in its sole discretion, ever deemed such a measure to be necessary.

Similarly, schedule 1 would exempt blood that is given solely for the purpose of research, such as clinical trials or population health studies.

We are also proposing to amend the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act to authorize regulations to include or exclude places required to be

licensed under this act, expand the public-interest grounds to deny a licence for new blood collection facilities, and strengthen our lab enforcement regime so that we can take quick and decisive action in the case of violations.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our volunteer donors, and we strongly support Ontarians as they continue giving blood and plasma voluntarily. I'd like to share with you some of the comments from the organizations and individuals who wrote to the ministry to express their opposition to private, for-profit plasma collection.

The British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Hemophilia Society had this to say: "It is crucial that we protect our volunteer system in Canada." The letter goes on to say, "We applaud you for taking action to stop payment for plasma and other blood products."

An Ontario citizen wrote to the ministry in these terms: "I strongly believe that we must ensure that the volunteer blood and plasma donation system is protected."

Finally, Fred Horne, Alberta's former Minister of Health, responded to the March 2014 letter from the Honourable Deb Matthews saying, "Like Ontario, Alberta has full confidence in the Canadian blood system and believes that Canadian Blood Services has the capacity to successfully manage the blood and blood products supply for our province's residents."

Judging from these and other communications from ordinary Ontarians, health care providers and advocacy organizations, as well as health system leaders, it is clear that people do not want for-profit plasma collection in this province.

I want to assure members that this decision to prohibit payment for blood or plasma in the province would have no negative impact on, or reduce the supply or availability of these products for Ontarians. We are taking strong action against paid blood donation to maintain the integrity of the voluntary blood donor system.

I'd now like to say a few things about the second part of our proposed legislation. Our government appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to review the chemotherapy drug underdosing incident and submit recommendations to prevent further similar incidents. Dr. Thiessen was uniquely qualified to lead this review. He is a former professor, was associate dean and is a current professor emeritus at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto. Following 33 years at the University of Toronto, six years were spent at the University of Waterloo, where, under his appointment and strategic responsibility, a new health sciences campus and Canada's 10th school of pharmacy were created.

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His qualifications span wide-ranging experiences in professional education, research methodologies, pharmaceuticals, the pharmaceutical industry, medication supply chain and patient care through an academic career of about 40 years. Dr. Thiessen earned his BSc pharmacy degree from the University of Manitoba and went on to complete an MSc at Manitoba and a PhD at the Univer-

sity of California, San Francisco. Dr. Thiessen's research interests include new approaches in cancer treatments.

On August 7, 2013, the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care released Dr. Thiessen's report, which contained a detailed factual review of the case of underdosing of chemotherapy drugs at four Ontario hospitals and one in New Brunswick. Dr. Thiessen found that while the impact on patients remains unknown, there had been a relatively low degree of underdosing, and the probability in combination drug therapy that a single drug factor, at the stated dosing shortfall, has had an overall serious effect is small.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our dedicated health care professionals for their continued commitment to caring for their patients and to their patients' safety. I know that most people in this system are there to ensure that their patients get the highest and best quality of care.

Dr. Thiessen's report contains a number of recommendations to prevent future incidents, directed towards five entities: the group purchasing organizations, Marchese Hospital Solutions, the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association and Health Canada.

Here are the recommendations. Recommendation number 1: Notwithstanding the underdosing incident, the continued use of group purchasing organizations to negotiate vendor product preparation pharmaceutical services shall not be discouraged. However, improvements are needed in the group purchasing organization-based processes.

Recommendation number 2: Every group purchasing organization shall review its procurement process to ensure that risk for patients is considered an essential evaluation and adjudication criterion when considering proposals.

Recommendation number 3: Every group purchasing organization shall develop and adopt a standardized product and/or service specification description that outlines the requirements for contracted sterile or non-sterile pharmaceutical preparation services.

Recommendation number 4: Annually in January, each group purchasing organization shall publicize information regarding the contracted pharmaceutical services provided by all its vendors.

Recommendation number 5: Marchese Hospital Solutions shall review and revise its product preparation processes to ensure that all its products meet the specifications required by professionals in treating patients effectively and safely.

Recommendation number 6: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall work quickly with Health Canada to define best practices and contemporary objective standards for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.

A lot of acronyms here—recommendation number 7: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall stipulate specialized electronic material rec-

ords and label requirements for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.

Recommendation number 8: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall consider a special designation and licence for any licensed pharmacy engaged in large volume non-sterile and sterile product preparation. Such pharmacies shall be inspected annually.

Recommendation number 9: The Ontario College of Pharmacists shall specify credentials beyond education and licensing for personnel engaged in non-sterile and sterile product preparation practices within a licensed pharmacy.

Recommendation number 10: Health Canada shall license all enterprises that function beyond the product preparation permitted within a licensed pharmacy; that is, all product preparation enterprises not within a licensed pharmacy shall be licensed.

Recommendation number 11: The Ontario Hospital Association shall conduct a formal review/audit to determine the efficiency and traceability of computer-based clinic and hospital records for patients and their treatments, and report the findings to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Recommendation number 12: The Ontario College of Pharmacists shall license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's clinics or hospitals.

We have accepted all the recommendations of Dr. Thiessen. To oversee the implementation of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations, the ministry established an implementation task force composed of government and stakeholder representatives. I'm pleased to report that the implementation of the recommendations is either complete or has advanced significantly, and the task force has since been disbanded as a result.

Recommendation 12, allowing the Ontario College of Pharmacists to license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's hospitals, is not currently provided for in legislation; hence the proposed amendments. We have been working very closely with the college and the Ontario Hospital Association on these amendments and will continue to do so.

The chemotherapy underdosing incident and other situations have highlighted the importance of ensuring that our health system entities, such as health regulatory colleges, are able to share information and coordinate responses in order to more effectively address circumstances that might pose a risk of harm to patients. The public expects that regulators and other health care entities should work seamlessly to improve response where patient care may be at risk. Under the proposed amendments, colleges would be able to more easily share information with their fellow health system partners, such as public hospitals and local public health units, on matters that may affect public health or patient care. Additionally, mandatory reporting requirements would be strengthened so that hospitals would be required to share more information with colleges that may indicate

concerns regarding a regulated health professional's practice.

The proposed amendments would also allow the government to more quickly appoint a college supervisor in order to address any serious concerns regarding the quality of a college's administration and management of its operations.

These provisions would align closely with our government's commitment to make the health care system more transparent and accountable. Our government fully supports the continuation of the self-government model with respect to the regulated health professions in the province, and continues to be highly supportive of the important and hard work done by our health regulatory colleges in regulating the activities of their members and upholding and protecting the public interest.

I'd like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association for working with us so diligently in the spring and early summer of 2013 as, together, we investigated what happened in the chemotherapy underdosing incident, and, even more importantly, for helping us to ensure that it does not happen again.

These proposed amendments will go a long way toward reducing the possibility of such an incident in the future. With the help of our health regulatory colleges, the amendments will enable a more rapid and integrated response to potential future incidents and enhance communication among entities that are responsible for patient care and safety.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand and provide some comments. About a week and a half ago, I gave an hour of discussion on this topic. It's always good to revisit it.

I'd just like to remind the government that I think this is a very complex issue. It's one that, generally, my PC caucus colleagues, including our health critic, Christine Elliott from Whitby—Oshawa, are supportive of, but we do want to make sure that it gets to committee and gets the full review that it needs. As I said, it's very complex. It would be very simple to say that our voluntary system works.

I do want to give a shout-out to Canadian Blood Services and, more importantly, those volunteer donors who have always been able to sustain our voluntary system, at this point. But there may be challenges down the road with our ever-increasing population and senior population. We're also using more and more of the blood plasma protein for things like Alzheimer's and dementia research.

The comment I made during my hour was that I think we need to slow things down and ensure that we fully explore with all the proper stakeholders at the table, and ensure that we're doing the utmost to make sure that we have a system in place that's going to make sure that demand is there and can be met, whether it be voluntary—and in some cases, particularly for the plasma protein, if we need to.

Right now, 70% of the plasma protein products are imported from the United States, and it's actually both paid and unpaid. What I tried to suggest the last time is that if people have a loved one who needs a blood transfusion—we're certainly self-supporting at this point. We may not be in the future, so we need to be prepared. You can't just turn that switch on overnight, so we need to have regulations and policy and legislation that are going to allow that and not detract from that. I think we have to be open-minded of what the future need is, putting into context that we do have that baby boom coming through. There's going to be more demand for certain types of blood and blood protein, plasma.

I just think that if we're going to do the best job for the people of Ontario, we need to make sure we have thorough consultation. We don't want to time-allocate things and just rush them through and make inadvertent mistakes that we have to pay for the hard way.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Speaker, and through you: This is a very important bill, and I appreciate the comments from people from around the House on it. I think we can agree that blood donors in Ontario and Canada should remain voluntary. I think that just because perhaps some other jurisdictions around the world pay doesn't mean that it's the right thing to do.

I did read in the bill, and I look forward to reading more about it, that there are some exemptions; for example, for research.

I will focus my comments on the fact that we need oversight. We see in my critic portfolio, transportation, some issues with privatization and divesting of duties by this government to the private sector without proper oversight. So when we talk about inspection, for example, of clinics, and when we talk about enforcement, we've got to make sure that we actually follow through, and follow through with the public sector doing it, people in the ministries making sure that the standards and requirements set out—and we'll hopefully have a more robust set of standards through this bill as it goes through the process—get implemented and followed and that inspections occur and enforcement takes place.

It's similar with this group procurement process. I was listening very attentively, and I heard people talking about the fact that this might be okay. Our critic from Nickel Belt, whom I respect a lot, would say no, there are problems.

What I'm not hearing, again, is the piece on inspection. I think I heard that somebody's going to go in there once a year and make sure there's oversight. Is that enough? No. Who's doing it? I don't know. Is it self-policing again? That's a great concept, self-policing.

I suggest that we need strong oversight. As this bill goes through the process, that's what I will be looking for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa South for informing us about this very important bill, Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014.

I too want to add my voice to stressing that Ontario is taking very decisive action to maintain the integrity of the province's health care system. We're seeing two previous bills that are being brought together that were introduced by the previous health minister. They died on the order paper back in May 2014.

If passed, we are going to see prohibiting paying or accepting payment for blood and plasma donations in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is aimed at protecting the integrity of our voluntary blood and plasma donation system. I think we can be very proud in this province that we do this on a voluntary basis.

The bill is also going to be focusing on the regulation of hospital pharmacies in response to Dr. Jake Thiessen's review of Ontario's cancer drug supply system and making other changes to strengthen aspects of our health care professional regulatory system. In the Kitchener-Waterloo area, I'm very familiar with Dr. Jake Thiessen, and I think we are very fortunate to have his commentary on this particular legislation, so we thank him and respect him for that.

In the act, the government is going to be keeping its commitment to licensing hospital pharmacies by the Ontario College of Pharmacists and enhancing the health professional regulatory system's ability to prevent and respond more quickly to events that may adversely affect patient care in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I have full confidence in the blood system that we have developed here in Canada. I know that Canadian Blood Services has the ability to very successfully manage the blood product supply for Ontarians.

I hope that we can rely on the opposition to give their approval to this very important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Seeing none, I return to the member for Ottawa South for his reply.

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to thank the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Sudbury and Kitchener Centre for their comments.

In response to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, we all seem to agree here that we need to keep the voluntary blood system in Ontario. It works well. I have full confidence in Canadian Blood Services. I think that's something that we can all agree on. We have been talking about these bills being time-sensitive, and I look forward to them getting to committee.

I would encourage people to remember that, in these things, we have to remember not to lose the possible in pursuit of the perfect. That's not to say that things don't need to be amended, but we have to move forward on these bills in order that we can better protect the people we serve.

I'm encouraged by some of the comments that were made in regard to oversight. The pharmacy part of this

bill does speak directly to oversight. We do, I think, express confidence very clearly in our regulated health colleges and our partners who work within the system. It is in everybody's interests that the public has confidence in the system. These measures in the bill address a situation that should not have occurred.

In terms of group purchasing organizations, I think very clearly Dr. Thiessen said that we should continue that practice. It's a good-value practice. I do believe, as one of the members opposite said, that we have to take a look at the oversight from a financial perspective as it integrates into our health system. And I think some of the measures in Bill 8 will help to enable us to do that. Thank you very much for your comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 21, which is An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.

I think I'll start off by talking about the blood donations part of it. I agree with many of the speakers that the voluntary blood donation system that we have is absolutely the best way to go. I can think of personal cases. We've all had stories of the problems in the past system that have been corrected. We had the Krever commission, which looked at the problems with the blood system. Safety is certainly the number one concern. I had a friend who had a major heart operation back in—I think it was about 1980; I might be off by a year or two—and from the blood transfusion developed hepatitis, I believe it was. That eventually led to his early death. I certainly miss my good friend John Lee, who came to our resort for many, many years. I'm sure we've all had friends and people we know who have been affected by some of the problems in the past. But I think safety is the number one concern, and certainly we rely on a volunteer system at this point.

I want to talk a bit about the products that come from plasma, the fractionated products and just plasma in general. I'll see if I can make some sense of this. Plasma is the yellow-coloured liquid that makes up 55% of total blood volume. Plasma can be obtained from either a regular, whole blood donation or through a process called plasmapheresis, where blood is collected from the donor, the plasma portion of the blood is then separated out and the blood cells are returned to the donor. It is so valuable for many purposes that it is sometimes referred to as liquid gold.

Plasma can be used as a direct transfusion to treat patients who are bleeding severely or who need plasma to help their blood clot. Plasma can also be used to manufacture plasma protein products. One of these products, known as IVIG, shows an early promise of success with Alzheimer's disease, so demand for it is expected to soar in the next few years. Once blood is collected, fractionation occurs, which is the processing of source plasma into

a range of specialized proteins for therapeutic use. Fractionated products include albumin, which is used for volume replacement during surgery or following massive bleeding, and—I'm sure I'm going to mess up some of these terms—immunoglobulins, for the prevention and treatment of infectious disease and immune disorders.

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It's important to note that this Bill 21 does not deal with transfusions when speaking about compensating donors for plasma. The current issue is whether the company can collect plasma from paid donors and sell it to companies that use this plasma for pharmaceutical products. My understanding is that currently Ontario is self-sufficient in fresh plasma products that come from volunteer donors, but that we import—and I think that the amount that's been talked about is 70% of the protein, the products that are made through fractionation, and they come from the States and many of those products are actually from paid donors. It does seem a little bit hypocritical that we're currently, for those protein products, buying them from the States and they do come from paid donors.

I note that the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association had a reception here in the last few weeks, and they handed out information. They brought, I think more importantly, some people who rely on the protein therapies to tell their story of just how important it is for them and what a difference it makes in their quality of life because they get these products. A bit of the information they handed out: Who Needs Plasma? Plasma protein therapies “replace missing or deficient proteins that allow individuals to lead healthy and more productive lives. The patients that rely on these therapies generally require regular infusions or injections throughout their lives. The diseases and conditions treated by plasma protein therapies are considered rare diseases because they affect a relatively small per cent of the population. Most are genetic, chronic conditions.”

They go through a number of different therapies: albumin treats shocks, burns, adult respiratory distress syndrome, cardiopulmonary bypass surgery; and there's IVIG—I won't go through all the list of things because I will not pronounce them properly—and alpha-1 antitrypsin and also, for people with hemophilia, coagulation factors. One of the points that I thought was particularly interesting is just how much is needed for one patient. For one patient, for one year, for primary immunodeficiency disease, you need 130 donations. For alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, you need 943 donations for one patient for one year. For hemophilia A, you need 1,237 donations. That's an awful lot of donations for one patient for one year.

But I think the point I was trying to make is, for those patients and these products, the products that we're using in Ontario are most of them, 70%, coming from the States, and there they do pay for a good portion of the donations. I understand that it's not a safety factor because of the processes they go through, but having just walked across and talked with the former health minister,

they were concerned about the effect it might have on the voluntary donation of plasma. I would say that's certainly a very valid concern.

Now, in the handout that came out from PPTA, that's one of the questions they answer in their myths and facts sheet, where they say “Myth: Allowing paid plasma donor centres will negatively impact on volunteer plasma and blood donation.” They give us evidence. “Evidence from other jurisdictions in Europe and the United States demonstrates that paid donor plasma centres actually increase the volunteer donations in both blood and plasma. Further evidence in Canada demonstrates that in the past, some volunteer plasma centres have not been successful.”

I would say, what I'm learning from this, Mr. Speaker, is that for these protein products, 70% of them are coming from the States and many of the donors are paid, but also what I think is that it's really important with this bill in particular that we do hear from the experts at committee so that there aren't any consequences that come out that might be negative.

Just to provide a little bit more information: In their myth and fact sheet that they're handing out, they say that patient groups are against compensated plasma donations. “Fact: Patient groups support plasma donations and the compensation for the donor's time and commitment. It takes hundreds of donations to make a single life-saving therapy. Without committed donors, thousands of patients with rare diseases would not have the treatment they need.” I was struck, and I'm sure any members who went to that presentation on plasma at lunch a couple of weeks ago were struck, by the stories of the people who really rely on these products and just how important it is to them and what a huge difference it makes for their quality of life.

Bill 21 is also talking about amendments respecting the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions. This is coming certainly from the diluted chemotherapy situation that happened in Ontario recently. I will say that this fall I had a number of meetings with pharmacists in general. They have had a day here at Queen's Park, and last week during constituency week, I had a couple of visits to pharmacies. I went and got my flu shot and did a promotion for it, because it has just been in the last couple of years that pharmacists have been able to deliver flu shots. I did it as much for publicity so people would be aware that you can now get a flu shot at the pharmacy. I was a little concerned with the photographer who was there taking the picture for the local paper, who was telling the pharmacist to look into the camera, and I was saying, “No. Look at my arm. I would prefer the needle to actually hit the spot it's supposed to hit.”

I also met with pharmacists in Huntsville last week. They were talking about how they are lobbying for expanded scope of practice. That does seem to make sense to me, especially for things like vaccinations. They can do the flu shot now; why not be able to do travel vaccinations? Certainly from the perspective of the consumer, that would be more convenient.

Last year I paid to get a vaccination. It was a vaccination that had to stay cold, so I had to actually go and pick it up at the pharmacy and then take it to my doctor's office, and it had to be injected within half an hour, or it might not work so well. That's a situation, certainly, where being able to just have it come out of the fridge at the pharmacy and get it done would make a lot more sense.

Mr. Speaker, also, as you may recall, the last time I had an opportunity to speak in the Legislature on other health care concerns, I was talking about the northern part of the riding, the Port Loring-Argyle area. I see the Speaker perk up when I say that. In that area, they have been without an ambulance since the summer. It was one of the unique parts of the province that had volunteer paramedics to maintain and work in the ambulance. I stated at that time that I'm very concerned about the remoteness of the area, that they need to have an ambulance stationed there. They have come up with a temporary situation where there would be an SUV and a fully qualified paramedic there. That was the sort of interim solution. But I don't think that's good enough. It's at least an hour from the closest hospital, so it could be a two-hour round trip to hospital.

I'm pleased to see, according to the local newspaper, that there is now a community paramedicine grant that was approved. So there is an actual ambulance stationed there with two paramedics who will be there 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and will also be doing some other services in the area. That is going to go through until June 2015. I'm happy about that. I hope that when we hit June, by then, another solution comes up so that one way or another there is an ambulance stationed there.

They are going through a review of the whole district of Parry Sound-Muskoka looking at emergency services and ambulance services. I suggested, if they are trying to save money, perhaps volunteer drivers. It's too hard to get qualified paramedics as volunteers, but perhaps volunteer drivers might be a way of doing it and keeping the service in the Port Loring-Argyle area.

Last week I also met with a few health providers. I met with the LHIN, the local health integration network. I met with nurse practitioners representing RNAO. From that, there are certainly some issues that have come out.

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I'm pleased that in Parry Sound-Muskoka, a month or so ago, the proposal put forward by the district of Muskoka for health hubs to have nurse practitioners in Port Carling and Dorset, and in a mobile unit, has been approved. That's really great news, to bring primary care closer to the people of Muskoka, and also the Wahta First Nation. There had been a nurse practitioner stationed there who was being funded by the band but hadn't really been formally recognized by the province. The Minister of Health also agreed to fund that nurse practitioner position.

Actually, when I had the nursing meeting last week, I met with Dana Strength, who's the nurse practitioner at Wahta, and Donna Kearney, who was formerly the nurse

practitioner in Rosseau; she put together the proposal for the district of Muskoka. That's good news, and I think it's moving in the right direction, where you're trying to get primary health care closer to the people and, really, the most efficient model possible.

I can tell you from my experience in Parry Sound, where we have six stand-alone nurse practitioners in places like Port Loring, Argyle, Pointe au Baril, Britt or Rosseau, that the communities very much support the nurse practitioners, and they seem to do a great job.

At my meeting with Donna Kearney and Dana Strength, they did raise concerns about whether the model that they've chosen—in the Parry Sound side of the riding, basically a doctor works with a nurse practitioner who is paid a set amount of money, no matter how many clients there are. They were a little concerned that, with this new model being set up, they'd be under the family health team; without being an expert on it, I would just hope that the government has done its research so that the financial implications still make sense.

Other issues that the nurse practitioners brought up to me were the compensation for nurse practitioners in rural areas. Donna pointed out to me that her salary had been the same for 10 years and hadn't increased at all, but nurse practitioners in hospital settings or other settings are making substantially more. That's certainly an issue for trying to make sure that you have good, experienced nurse practitioners in these more remote, rural areas, where I would argue that they really are responsible for the full scope of the kinds of things that they do. That's something I certainly think needs to be addressed: Their compensation has to be competitive with what other nurse practitioners make, especially considering the sort of work that they do.

I also met with the LHIN, and that raised some concerns for me, because the province is going through some funding changing right now. They're moving the hospitals to—I believe it was called a quality-based funding model. I may have that terminology a bit incorrect, but essentially they figured out a certain cost for a certain operation, and that's what you get paid; if your costs are higher than that, then you don't get paid as much.

My first inclination is that this is going to have a very negative effect on Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, to the tune of millions of dollars less operational funding. I think it's the right way to be moving health care, out into the community. If you can get the care you need at a nursing station, you shouldn't be going to the emergency department, and it's much more reasonable in terms of the cost of it to be able to get it done in a health clinic, nursing station or family health team versus the emergency department.

But I'm a little concerned about the transition. I know that Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is going to face some real challenges. We've heard about cutbacks in other parts of the province. I know the Ontario Nursing Association president claims that there have been 1,600 layoffs of nurses across the province, and I'm worried. I

haven't seen the exact numbers yet, but if Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare faces a big change in their operational funding in one year, they're going to be faced with making decisions about how many nurses they have. They're going to be faced with trying to rationalize what they do offer, and that is a big concern, something that I am certainly concerned about.

In the meeting I had with the LHIN, I did raise some of the health concerns I've heard about. We have a Mr. Gary Froude, who was citizen of the year a couple of years ago in the Port Carling area—very much involved with all kinds of community events. He suffers from a rare disease that has him in a hospital and on a ventilator. Gayle Dempsey, his spouse, is trying to get him home. He wants to come home. He's been in the hospital for a year now, and apparently there's not a ventilator program available in Muskoka. I asked the LHIN about this. I hope they can look into it to see what might be done.

Every way you look at it, it's got to be cheaper to have him at home. He wants to be at home. Who would want to be in hospital as their home? Obviously, the cost of being in a hospital on a daily basis would be crazy. I'm very hopeful that the LHIN will somehow be able to provide ventilation at-home services, which are available in some other parts of the province, so that Gary Froude can come home.

I can see that I have used my time up, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We're talking, of course, about government Bill 21. It was not only looked at in some detail by the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, but an hour was devoted to it by our eminent health critic, the member from Nickel Belt.

There is no question that this government is privatizing our health care system. I've into my ninth year here now. They cut eye exams. Remember that? They cut physio. Remember that?

Did you know that we're only one of two provinces that will not extend OHIP coverage to our new immigrants? In the age of Ebola, this is madness. This is privatization, and this is madness.

Physio, of course, is gone. Dental care: Remember the promises about dental care from this government? Well, the cheque is in the mail on that one and not received. I hear about that all the time in my community.

This is privatization. We have the rise of private clinics, and now we have the spectre of medical tourism. As if the wait time for surgical procedures and other hospital necessities is not long enough, we now have queue-jumpers because they can pay cash. If that's not privatization, I don't know what is. That's privatization.

If you couch this with the fact that they followed the Mike Harris government, and they privatized even more than they did, that is pretty shocking. This is shocking.

Tommy Douglas—let us remember him—said that medicare always has to be fought for every generation

and it has to be expanded every generation. We need pharma care at the federal level. We need dental care at the provincial level. We need more medicare, not less medicare, and less medicare is what we're getting. This is just the latest in a series of scandals. Stay tuned for more. That's what you get with privatization.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm really pleased to add my voice to say a couple of words on Bill 21. I listened very carefully to my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka. He spoke passionately about health care in his riding and some of his concerns. It was nice to hear that he agrees with some of the transition in health care that has been happening over the past many years, especially with the pharmacists having a new practice with vaccinations etc. and nurse practitioners being part of a family health team and the local clinics.

He also mentioned some of his constituents requiring home care services. He believes that the transition we're going through is in the right direction, but he has some concerns. I don't disagree with him having some concerns, because when you try something new in a system, there are growing pains, and there are going to have to be adjustments.

I was pleased to hear that he has continuous discussions with his LHIN and his CCAC people because those are the folks on the ground in his neighbourhood who are responsible for making the changes that he so dearly wants for his constituents. I congratulate him for that.

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He also touched upon the bill in terms of what is happening with the need to protect our voluntary system of blood donations in our province and our country. He sort of agrees that we need to do something after he has done a good review of what has been happening with the system and where we get all our protein that is needed for some patients in our province. So I want to say that the member has presented a good case for what he was saying, and the government is listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments, and I have a couple of questions for the government.

I know the previous speaker on the government side talked about the fact that they're listening, and, on Bill 21, I don't think they are listening. We had some groups here in the precinct a couple of weeks ago. They were very clear to me. They sent me a letter that I shared with the government House leader that there are groups that feel we should have province-wide hearings on Bill 21. I know that the government has already put us on notice that they're going to rush this bill through and not give those people that opportunity. I'm sorry that they're going to be shut out, given the fact this they were very clear when they were here that we should have a chat about it.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka talked about the fact that 80% of all plasma-derived medicinal products for Canadian patients are manufactured from paid plasma donations from the United States. I appreciate some of the points he made about a voluntary system versus a paid system. I think he put some great comments on the record.

I guess the question I would have for the government is, don't they feel that a domestic plasma collection system that is able to have regulatory oversight from Canadians—isn't that something that you want? Right now, I'm told that Health Canada has no direct oversight on the plasma that we're getting from the US, so you have to ask that question of the government. Do they consider United States plasma donations that are paid for safer than they feel Canadian plasma is?

I really believe that the member has put some great comments on the record. He certainly brought some local examples. But it all goes back—is the government willing to hear from the stakeholders, the patient groups? Are they willing to have those hearings that I think this bill requires? We'll soon see.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka always brings a local example to every piece of legislation in this House, and I think that's very valuable because there are obviously great disparities in the levels of service that people in this province receive, depending on where they live.

Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, while it is a good title—of course, it does combine two pieces of legislation, formerly known as Bill 178 and Bill 117—is, once again, though, an example of a piece of legislation coming to the House where informed voices have sat down with the government and the opposition critics and produced some very tangible suggestions to strengthen it, and yet it still gets presented to us in a very weak form. It seems to be a trend, and perhaps it's a theme. That's disappointing, because when it gets to committee it takes that much more work to try to make it right.

I just say to the government, with greatest respect, of course: Why not do it right the first time so that when it gets here to the House, we can pull back the layers when it gets to committee?

It is interesting because the social policy committee, in the last session, had made some recommendations to make the piece of legislation stronger. They had made amendments and asked the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to review best practices, including oversight, which the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has raised, for procurement and the distribution of oncology drugs.

Bill 117, of course, was tabled in October 2013, before the committee issued its report. You have to wonder. I do recognize that the government was trying to catch up because they left a loophole for for-profit blood collection open, but the work before us is even more profound going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We return now to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his reply.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to the members from Parkdale–High Park, Scarborough–Rouge River, Leeds–Grenville and Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments.

I did speak about scope of practice, specifically related to pharmacists, in my speech. This past week, I happened to hurt my hip, back, something—I'm not quite sure yet because I haven't actually made it to the doctor yet. When I couldn't get in to see my regular doctor, for the first time in my life I visited a chiropractor and went for a couple of visits just trying to get a little bit of relief. The chiropractor says, "Well, this may help, but I really need an X-ray to know what to do next." It seems a little strange when you're looking at scope of practice that the chiropractor or physiotherapist—and I'm not sure about whether a nurse practitioner can order one—wouldn't be able to order an X-ray. Apparently, he has to write a letter to my doctor, and then I have to visit the doctor to be able to go get an X-ray. I'm sure this costs a lot more for the system, and it's certainly not convenient for the users. I think that's something that is worth looking at to both make the system work better and save some money, because there's limited dollars.

The member from Scarborough–Rouge River talked about nurse practitioners working in a family health team. In Parry Sound–Muskoka, we're unique on the Parry Sound side, where the nurse practitioners are working on their own. They work with a doctor. The doctor is just paid a stipend, but otherwise, they're on their own, and they do a great job. It's a model that could be used all across, especially rural and northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and share my thoughts on Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. This bill, as I understand it, enacts the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, which bans payment, reimbursement and compensation for blood and plasma in Ontario.

In the last session we were here, this bill was presented to the House. I was hopeful that we were going to be able to get that bill passed. It was two separate bills at the time; now they're combined into one. That was the first bill that was brought to our attention.

What really kind of tweaked my interest was that this government knew since November 2012 that there was a private for-profit agency on the brink of setting up to actually collect blood in exchange for reimbursement, for payment. So why it took this government that long—it's really discouraging to think that they would not act quicker on such a vital issue.

Speaker, I think we're all in agreement that we should not be reimbursing people for blood donations. I think people should be doing it out of the kindness of their heart, helping their fellow man, being a humanitarian, because if we need help, we're hoping that people come

forward when we're in need of perhaps any blood services for health reasons that we may incur.

The other portion of this bill, schedule 2, that's now being presented in Bill 21, is the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. The member from Ottawa South actually read each of the 12 recommendations that Dr. Thiessen presented to the committee. When I was sitting here, I had to read the bill again to understand. He was reading each one. The impression was that these 12 recommendations were adopted and implemented into Bill 21—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The member from Sudbury is saying it was a good point. As I sat here, I thought, "Wow, this is wonderful. We're getting all 12 recommendations in this bill. What a progressive Liberal government we have. At last, there is a bill that I can actually 100% get behind" and not just the fancy title or the title that gives the idea that they are—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Impression.

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Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think I used that word, "impression," so I think I'm going to try to say they're giving the idea to everyone that this is being done fully from the 12 recommendations from Dr. Thiessen. As the member from Ottawa South read that, and very heartfelt, I thought to myself, "I better check my facts," because usually I'm pretty meticulous. People maybe know me—I'm kind of detail-oriented. When I think I'm wrong, I question and I go look. So anyway, I went and looked at the situation again. Sure enough, there are not 12 recommendations that were made by Dr. Thiessen in this bill. So, New Democrats, we were right. There is only one. There is absolutely only one recommendation that is in this bill, Bill 21.

You know what that recommendation is, Speaker? It's identifying pharmacies within hospitals as part of the Ontario College of Pharmacists, so that they have oversight over the pharmacies in hospitals. That isn't the end-all and be-all of those recommendations to actually prevent underdosing of chemotherapy drugs in the context of the example we're talking about.

The other kind of concerning part, and the member from Kitchener—Waterloo pointed it out as I was going to talk about this, because it's really important, was that the social policy committee—our health critic was involved in those deliberations. She spoke very informatively of how the social policy committee took all this information from deputants, from Dr. Thiessen, from Medbuy—they listened to Medbuy. Some of the things they uncovered in Medbuy were very interesting. One of the pieces was—and I'm kind of giving a little bit of background where I'm going—they asked Medbuy, "How many employees under your purview make over \$100,000?" The answer was approximately five. After they did some digging, there were 17 employees that made over \$100,000.

I don't understand why that recommendation from the social policy committee wasn't something that was adopted into this bill. If transparency is truly the mantra

of the Liberal government—because we know they want to be transparent; we know they want to be accountable. The Premier said it herself: Ask her anything. I don't know if she said that, but I'll say it: Ask her anything. I hope you get a transparent answer.

So what they did is they tabled the bill, and I don't know if this was a strategic kind of motive or a strategic kind of—what do you call it, Catherine? Move. Yes, a strategic move. That's right, like when you're playing chess, right? And they were one step ahead of the social policy committee, maybe. The Sergeant-at-Arms is kind of chuckling.

So I'm questioning that. Why would a transparent government put a bill on the table before the social justice committee did the work it was mandated to do? I think that's a very important question. It really shines the light on this government and who they want to hold accountable. If you wanted to hold accountable the parties that were involved in this underdosing of chemotherapy drugs, there was an actual measure that could help hold accountability in this whole fiasco.

The other recommendations that the social justice policy made that were very astute, very smart, and got to the point of transparency in this situation—they had said here, "In order to maintain transparency and accountability"—those are two buzzwords we're all using about this government—"the government of Ontario, through legislative or other means, [should] take those steps necessary to ensure that group purchasing organizations"—GPOs—"and shared services organizations are subject to all aspects of the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act." So we were talking earlier today about Bill 8, the bill that was brought forward, and that was the bill that actually says "public sector and MPP accountability and transparency."

So, Speaker, in that regard, there are funds that are given to hospitals. The government funds the hospital from the public purse. Then these group purchasing organizations get some of that money, but yet they're not held accountable under the public sector accountability act. So that was a really strong recommendation I felt made a huge world of difference to accountability in this bill.

The other one—I talked about this, but again this was through the committee—the salaries of employees and executives of the group purchasing organizations, because the health critic talked about 17 employees and the purchasing agents who made over \$100,000, but I wonder—an interesting question—how much the executives made from, again, the public purse.

The third one was that "group purchasing organizations and shared services organizations are subject to audits by ... the Auditor General." What's wrong with that piece of transparency? I don't understand why that wouldn't be a criteria that this government felt was important for accountability and transparency. That was part of the problem that was identified through the committee. They couldn't follow the money. Our finance critic is always saying, "The way you're going to get the

answers is to follow that money," but somehow—I don't know if I should use the word; I might have to withdraw. So I'm going—I think I'm on the—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: What's the word?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Well, the word is "buried." Can I say that?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Of course you can.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, okay.

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, maybe not.

It feels like, because these recommendations weren't up front and put into this bill, it's like it was buried. These things are being buried. I wasn't sure if I could—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Hidden.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes—hidden, cloaked.

The last one, Speaker, was that "public and broader public sector members of the group purchasing organization and shared services organizations pay for the

value of procurement services as opposed to a percentage of purchases." Oh, and there is one more—excuse me: "Rebates and value adds" should be "discontinued."

The health critic made a very important point and stressed very clearly that part of the problem was the contractors, the middleman—Medbuy. There is a financial piece in there, and there was a transparency piece when they actually put that contract out to bid.

Speaker, we're completely ignoring these recommendations, and I think that's wrong. So I hope when this goes back to committee that the government will listen and do the right thing and put these back in this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being very close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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Tuesday 18 November 2014

Mardi 18 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Duguid moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Duguid.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the traffic from Scarborough sometimes can be a little bit troublesome. I got here just in time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the great member from Ottawa—Orléans, who was ready to get up right away and sub in for me if I didn't get here completely on time. But I did make it, so kudos to Palmer, my great driver, who didn't break any traffic laws to get me here, but was very adept at getting me through all that construction in downtown Toronto.

It's a privilege for me to reintroduce—that's what we're doing today—the Better Business Climate Act. It's introduced primarily in very similar form—very close to identical, I believe—to the original bill that was introduced in the previous Parliament. It was done that way deliberately, because we made the commitment to reintroduce the bill in that form. That doesn't mean, though, that if there are improvements that can be made to the bill, we wouldn't be open to doing that as the bill works its way through the Legislature and through the committee process.

Today I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this proposed legislation that, if passed, would create a better business climate by reducing burdens. It will drive economic growth by supporting the development of clusters. These initiatives are part of our government's eco-

nomie plan, which is focused on sustained job creation and building stronger partnerships across the economy. The proposed better business climate legislation is key to building on those partnerships. It's about providing faster, smarter and more streamlined government services to our businesses. It's about reducing the unnecessary regulatory, administrative and compliance burden, with the key word being "unnecessary."

It's not about impacting or removing necessary protections or regulations that impact health, safety or workplace standards. I think it's always important, when we talk about removing unnecessary burdens, that we stress that: It's not about removing the protections that Ontario's quality of life and Ontarians' quality of life is dependent upon; it's about removing those unnecessary regulatory burdens that really aren't contributing to our quality of life or safety in the workplace, or health or safety issues across the province.

It's not only about what we regulate sometimes, it's about how we regulate it. An example of the kind of actions that we're taking was highlighted in the Fewer Burdens, Greater Growth report published by my ministry earlier this year. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has reduced the length of the no-lost-time injury claim forms by 60%, which is a very significant time savings, and it now allows claims to be made online or over the phone, which is a better situation for everyone.

Another example is the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change improvements to the approvals process for small-scale solar facilities. By moving from a one-size-fits-all to a more risk-based approach, they have reduced approval wait times from 147 days to less than 10 minutes for low-risk projects. That just makes sense, Mr. Speaker. These actions have managed to cut the pre-application costs from \$100,000 to less than \$5,000 per operator, contributing almost \$2 million in industry-wide savings. Those are the kinds of initiatives that make a difference for our business community, save our businesses money and, at the same time, often streamline our ability to get through approvals quicker. Administrative process changes like these can save Ontario businesses millions of dollars, while still protecting the public interest.

These burdens, be they time, money or resources, frankly are a drag on businesses, and they're a drag on our productivity, innovation and economic growth. When you think about these being tough economic times, this really is a time when all of us—and I mean all of us in this Legislature—ought to be working together to reduce regulatory burden for businesses, because this is a time when we don't have the fiscal wherewithal to be able to

put as much resources as we'd probably like to into some of the partnerships that we provide with businesses. This is a time, though, when reducing regulatory burden just makes sense. So we're committed to reducing unnecessary burdens on an ongoing basis.

We're committed to making Ontario one of the few places in the world that measures and reports on the time and financial savings to businesses. That's really important. Not only does this help our businesses, especially by saving them time and money, it makes Ontario a more attractive place to invest in the global economy.

We're pleased to be recognized as a leader in the reduction of unnecessary regulatory requirements by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. In fact, I believe Nicole Troster is here. When I came in this morning—there she is, Nicole, thank you for being here. Welcome. Nicole is the senior policy analyst for the CFIB, who is here today to support second reading of this bill.

When we announced our intent to introduce this proposed legislation, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was there to support these changes. In fact, when I held a round table with the CFIB back in 2012, they said that a concrete outline of the government's commitment to cut red tape in legislation was one of their top priorities. I know that politicians, government and ministers like to take credit for ideas, but I have to tell you it was the CFIB in that round table, and through a series of round tables that we had with small businesses across this province back in 2012, that came up with the proposal that we ought to bring forward legislation such as this to enshrine in legislation our commitment to reduce regulatory burden and to measure regulatory burden and the impact in time and dollars that it has on our businesses. So I want to give the CFIB the credit for their leadership in this area and for working with us on this initiative, and I'd like you to acknowledge Nicole Troster and her colleagues' efforts to bring this forward. Thank you, Nicole.

0910

I know that enshrining accountability in legislation is not always the easiest road for a government to choose, but businesses have told us that burden reduction is very important to them. By introducing this legislation that will hold us to account on our commitments, we're demonstrating that it is also very important to our government. Holding the government accountable on regulatory burden also has strong support from our stakeholders, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Financial Services Alliance and the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

Since 2008, our Open for Business initiative to modernize government has eliminated some 80,000 burdens, which represents 17% of all regulatory requirements. We plan to continue these efforts with a goal to save businesses \$100 million over the next three years. This is an ambitious target, but we're very determined to meet it. It will help businesses across the province as they spend less time filling out paperwork, searching for informa-

tion, hiring consultants and waiting for government approvals.

You may ask: How do we know that \$100 million is achievable? Well, Mr. Speaker, we know this because we started in 2013 to attribute dollar- and time-saving costs to work on burden reduction projects.

It's worth noting that the proposed legislation is only one piece of a suite of initiatives the government has implemented under our Open for Business initiative to make Ontario's business and regulatory climate predictable, transparent and responsive. For example, we've held 10 round tables with key business sectors to address their top five priority issues. We now require that proposed regulations impacting business be posted online for 45 days for stakeholder feedback.

And when they're introduced, it's done predictably. When we change regulations in the province of Ontario, they're either introduced to begin on July 1 or January 1, for the most part, so that businesses have time to adjust. They see these changes coming; they're not coming throughout the year. It makes life a little bit easier for our businesses, stakeholders and others. It probably makes it easier to do government in that way, too.

We all know that the world of business is changing constantly, and government needs to keep pace with this change by continually making its processes faster, smarter and easier for businesses and stakeholders. That's why this proposed legislation is so important. By committing government to annually report, this legislation will, if passed, ensure that this and future governments will stay focused on reducing burden and modernizing processes. In a sense, it holds all of our feet to the fire.

British Columbia and Saskatchewan have both passed similar pieces of legislation in recent years. By enshrining annual reporting on regulatory burden in legislation, Ontario will not only catch up to other leading jurisdictions; we'll leapfrog to the head of the line. That's somewhere that I think all of us in this Legislature want our province to be.

There is a second component to the proposed Better Business Climate Act. Just as reducing burdens helps improve partnerships between government and businesses, building stronger, more competitive regional economic clusters will also further develop these important partnerships. I want to acknowledge and thank the Toronto Region Board of Trade for their leadership on the development of clusters.

Mr. Speaker, it's not like this is a new concept—cluster development has been talked about for at least 20 years, if not longer—but it's a technique that has proven to work in jurisdictions around the world. It's something that our Toronto Region Board of Trade has been a real champion of, and something that I'm very proud this government has partnered with them and other organizations like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to continue to promote. As they so aptly put it, clusters collaborate to compete.

Clusters exist across the province, from the mining and forestry clusters, which I know my friend behind me

here is a big leader in, to the financial services cluster in Toronto, to the information and communication technology clusters in Ottawa, Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo. We have a huge bioscience cluster in this province that has so much potential, one of the top in North America. We have a very significant aerospace cluster, seen as one of the fastest growing anywhere in the world today. Our clean tech cluster is one that would rival any cluster anywhere in the world, and it's growing. Our clean water tech cluster is another one that has huge potential.

So we have a number of clusters across this province. Many of them have developed just organically. Some of them have developed with the help of our government. For instance, just this past July, Minister Sousa announced that our government is renewing funding for the Toronto Financial Services Alliance, an organization representing an important Ontario cluster.

The Toronto region is North America's second-largest financial services hub. After New York, Ontario's financial services account for 50% of Canada's sector, and generate over \$54 billion in gross domestic product. So we're real players when it comes to the financial services sector—as I said, top two in North America. It's a good place for us to be, but it's an increasingly competitive global environment, and we need to continue to invest in our strengths. This renewed funding demonstrates not only our commitment to this sector, but our understanding of the importance of cluster development.

Another example of our commitment to cluster development is our investment in the Bombardier-Centennial College aerospace hub project, to be located at Downsview. I had the privilege of being part of that when I was Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and as well when I held this post previously. I'm really excited about what that investment entails. What it does, Mr. Speaker, is create a great example of experiential learning, where we have a private sector partner, Bombardier, partnering with one of our leading educational institutions, Centennial College, to put together an incredible experiential learning opportunity, a right-on-site learning environment for aerospace students to learn with Bombardier and create that next-generation aerospace workforce.

But it's the beginning of a vision to potentially create, in and around Downsview, one of our fastest-growing clusters, a part of our economy that has done reasonably well through the recession but is really starting to excel now, as we come through this into this period of growth. It's something that I see as almost a visionary investment that I think is going to pay huge dividends in the decades ahead and make Ontario—we're already one of the fastest-growing aerospace clusters, but I think we want to see Ontario as one of the global-leading aerospace clusters.

When you combine Ontario's aerospace strength with Montreal's aerospace strength, you've got a little bit of Canadian access to aerospace technological strength that I think can be very globally competitive—and is very globally competitive. So this is an area that merits con-

sideration, as well, as a cluster worth watching and a cluster worth supporting.

If passed, our government would be the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate the development of clusters. But let's make it clear: Governments can't create clusters. I think it's really important that we say this as we bring forward legislation to commit this government and future governments to being involved in and facilitating clusters. That's what our role is: to work with the private sector, identify our economic strengths and do everything we can, as a government, with the programs we have in place and the policies we put in place, whether they be taxation policies, whether they be business-partnership-type policies or whether they be policies to support organizations that advocate to grow business clusters. That's the kind of input that government really has.

At the end of the day, it is the business community that has to drive these policies and the business community that has to grow these clusters. We're there to help in any way we can, and in some cases we're there to lead, where leadership is required. For the most part, we get really tremendous leadership in this province from our business community. The Toronto Region Board of Trade has, I think, matured over the last 20 years to be one of the most effective regional boards of trade anywhere in North America today. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the success story there—Allan O'Dette, whom I think every member in this Legislature has worked with, has done a tremendous job maturing that organization and creating relevancy to that organization, reaching down to the business grassroots across this province to make the Ontario Chamber of Commerce one of the leading chambers of commerce anywhere in North America.

Certainly, both of these organizations have been integral in the development of our government's economic development policy. In fact, if you look at some of the work that has been done by the Ontario chamber and the Toronto Region Board of Trade, you'll see much of that reflected—actually, it's very similar—in our economic development plans and policies that we've brought forward as well. I think it's important that governments are in sync with their business community, and that's very much what this legislation helps us do.

0920

The Better Business Climate Act, if passed, would provide our government with a new tool to help clusters like Toronto's financial sector through development plans. They will help facilitate stronger planning and collaboration with industry and with partner ministries to raise the province's capacity for innovation and economic prosperity.

Through the planning process, Ontario will facilitate new partnerships by working with industry leaders, academic and research institutions and local businesses to identify key policies that will support a long-term vision and plan for cluster growth. The plans will bridge industry and Ontario's academic and research institutions to

commercialize leading-edge research. The role of industry in the development of cluster plans is crucial. Cluster plans cannot and shouldn't be, as I said before, led by government; rather, they must develop out of leadership from within the industry.

The proposed legislation will also provide a cluster-focused lens to all of our economic development initiatives as we move forward. Collaboration with Ontario's key clusters will allow government to better allocate and coordinate access to government programs and help shape future policy. To build upon the success of these cluster plans and ensure that they're aligned with changing industry and economic trends, mandatory reviews of the plans will be required every five years. Again, Mr. Speaker, that's important—to make sure that the plans that we put in place remain relevant in this fiercely competitive, fast-changing global economy.

This legislation is critical as it recognizes the importance of clusters to Ontario's economic development. As I mentioned, this will be a first for any North American jurisdiction. As always, we encourage discussion and input from the members opposite and my colleagues behind me here today as well. This is a piece of legislation that was introduced to the Legislature earlier in the previous term. Our stakeholders have had an opportunity to have a good look at it; there may be some ideas as to how it can be improved. I want you to know that, as minister, I'll be encouraging my colleagues at committee to consider any ideas that come forward that would strengthen this legislation in ways that we could all agree on.

I look forward to seeing this bill go through this Legislature and go on to committee. I know that my parliamentary assistant will do a great job at committee, and she'll be open to suggestions from the parties opposite. As always, when I have legislation going through, I welcome that input. I encourage members opposite, if they do have amendments that they'd like to bring forward, to talk to my colleagues as well to make sure we can word those amendments in ways that make it easier for us to be able to adopt them at committee rather than come in and word some of these amendments in ways that make it difficult for us to support, even though we'd like to support them. That's an open-door policy that we'll have, and I know my parliamentary assistant will look forward to working with my friends in opposition.

I'm pleased to be able to lead off debate on this important piece of legislation. I see it as an important piece of legislation. It is by no means the centerpiece of our economic development strategy; it is but one part of it, but an important part of it. More than anything, what this legislation indicates is that our government listens. We sit down and we consult with the business community. We consulted with the CFIB and small businesses a number of years ago, and this legislation is the result of many of those discussions. We've consulted with the Toronto Region Board of Trade and our business leaders across the province on the importance of clusters, and this legislation reflects that input as well. Sometimes

when you get legislation that is crafted not only here internally but crafted with the help of our stakeholders in our business community, it makes for a stronger piece of legislation.

I don't know whether the opposition will be supporting this legislation or not; I can't recall what their views were when we initially introduced this in the last session. But I encourage them to approach this particular piece of legislation in a constructive way. It's there to be constructive; this is not really a political piece of legislation. This isn't the kind of legislation that goes in our political brochures at the end of the day. I can't see my good friend Mike Colle putting in his householder that we're going to do massive cluster development. I don't know if his constituents would jump up and down about that.

Mr. Mike Colle: It helps small business, though.

Hon. Brad Duguid: But he knows how important this is to building a strong business community, and that's important to all of our constituents. He did mention his support for small businesses, and that's something that I think each and every one of us in this House can rally around and something that probably would resonate a little bit better in our householders and in our communications with our residents.

But it is really important, I think, for this government and this Legislature to continue to be in sync with our business community. As I said before, when you look at the work that's been done, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce put out, many years ago now, their Emerging Stronger plan, and they've renewed it again; they had a second phase of it. If you look at the things that they're talking about in that plan and you look at this government's economic development strategy, it is absolutely in sync. It's about investing in our people, building a strong education system, building strong skills, building the strongest workforce anywhere in the world. That's our single greatest competitive advantage. It's also about investing in infrastructure. As members in this Legislature know, this government is very in tune with that: a \$130-billion investment that we're making over the next 10 years, a record investment not only in Ontario, but right across this country. There are few jurisdictions anywhere in North America that are making that kind of commitment during challenging fiscal times, but we recognize the linkage between infrastructure and the economy, and how important it is for us to be able to drive jobs and economic growth through our investments in infrastructure.

We recognize the fact that we've gone through decades of not having adequate investment in infrastructure. In the last 10 years, we've invested \$100 billion in roads, bridges, transit, water, waste water, hospitals and schools, and many other forms of infrastructure. So we've picked it up the last 10 years, but we've got to keep that going and we've got to actually enhance those efforts. Our plans do that. That creates jobs as well, Mr. Speaker. When you think that the investment is \$130 billion over 10 years, estimates are that it will support about 110,000 jobs every single year. Our investments over the last 10

years have supported, on average, about 100,000 jobs every year. I think in many ways our investments in infrastructure helped Ontario get through that global recession a lot stronger than most other jurisdictions in North America were able to weather it. So they're smart investments for the economy, but they're also smart for our quality of life. As I experienced this morning, getting here just in the nick of time, giving myself an hour to get here from Scarborough—10 years ago I would have been here with 15 minutes to spare. But it's a little tighter now getting around our urban areas—and not just in Toronto; in Ottawa, throughout the greater Toronto and Hamilton region it's getting harder to get around. So that's why those investments are important, not only from a business perspective but for our quality of life. Of course, when you look at the Emerging Stronger documents and you look at our economic development strategy, you see a real synchronization as well when it comes to building a strong, dynamic economy and making investments that ensure that we have a strong climate for investment.

Our efforts to date, among other things, have made Ontario number one in North America for foreign direct investment. That's not just something we're proud of as a government; it's something that's really important, because that's what drives business growth, that's what creates jobs and that's what sets Ontario in a class of its own when it comes to attracting new businesses to locate here, when it comes to attracting new businesses in advanced manufacturing, which we're seeing more and more of—

Mr. Mike Colle: Alliston.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —because Ontario has very much become a gateway to investment and access to that North American market.

The member beside me, Mike Colle, just mentioned that Alliston had a recent announcement that this government and Honda made together, where we—I'm getting a note here asking me whether I'm concluding soon. Yes, I'm concluding soon, but I'm on a bit of a roll here.

0930

When I talk about Alliston, it's something that excites me, an \$857-million investment in the Alliston Honda plant that's going to support over 4,000 jobs, which is terrific, and thousands more indirect jobs across this province in the auto sector. That's the kind of investment that we're working to continue to try to attract.

Given the note that I have now, I have been trying to keep my eye on the clock here because I want to make sure there is lots of time for my parliamentary assistant to be able to speak as well. I'm looking forward to hearing her comments and I know she's going to lead this legislation through, with the will of the Legislature, to committee. She's going to do a great job getting this through and working with my colleagues opposite to ensure this is a strong piece of legislation to drive growth and drive job creation throughout the province of Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll now turn it over to my parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. That's a long title, Minister.

Now I recognize the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure, actually, to be here and introduce and bring forward Bill 7, and not only because of everything that was mentioned by Minister Duguid, but also as a previous business owner myself and seeing the importance of partnership between government and businesses.

I also want to pick up where Minister Duguid left off about those partnerships and how the Better Business Climate Act will, if passed, help build better partnerships between the government and Ontario businesses.

L'Ontario a certes fait de grands pas en s'adaptant aux récents changements de l'économie mondiale.

Our economic plan is focused on sustained job creation and building stronger partnerships across the economy. The proposed legislation will facilitate collaboration with industry, academic and research institutions, and local governments to support the development of cluster plans. This initiative will complement the government's actions to strengthen the economy and increase Ontario's overall competitiveness. That includes our investment of \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years; introducing Ontario's Going Global Trade Strategy; announcing our \$295-million youth jobs strategy; reducing the marginal effective tax rate on new business investment in Ontario by half since 2009; and ensuring that Ontarians have the skills and education they need.

Nous avons accompli beaucoup pour positionner l'Ontario malgré les défis des dernières années. Mais nous ne pouvons pas prendre cela pour acquis.

Many economic experts say Ontario can become an even more prosperous and competitive jurisdiction in the 21st century by leveraging government-business partnerships to help strengthen industry clusters. In markets worldwide, clusters have jump-started industries and accelerated economic development by creating a supportive economic environment for business, academia and innovation.

Les niches industrielles jouent un rôle clé dans le développement économique régional.

They can help support the creation of sustainable, well-paid jobs, stimulate innovation, attract investment, strengthen linkages between research institutions and firms, and anchor pools of talented labour.

Mr. Speaker, that's half of the equation of the proposed Better Business Climate Act. The other is burden reduction.

I want to emphasize that Ontario's new approach to burden reduction was not developed in isolation. It has emerged from relationships and partnerships that the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure has been building with business groups and stakeholders for several years.

In 2008, the government created Ontario Open for Business, a cross-government initiative to create faster and smarter government-to-business services and to

establish a modern system of government. Through this initiative, ministries undertook an extensive baseline count of all regulatory requirements and then removed over 80,000 unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Ontario is now moving from counting the number of burdens eliminated to measuring the real impacts of this work in terms of time and cost savings for Ontario businesses and other stakeholders. This practice will put Ontario in line with leading jurisdictions and will help ensure burden reduction activities have tangible results for business.

Mais ceci n'est qu'un seul aspect des efforts que l'Ontario fait pour améliorer la façon dont le gouvernement réglemente et travaille avec les entreprises.

Ontario's regulatory policy includes a range of tools and processes to make sure that when new regulations are needed to protect Ontarians' health and safety or our environment, they are effective, transparent and evidence-based.

We recently introduced a mandatory review policy to ensure high-impact regulations are reviewed at least every 10 years and tested to ensure that they are relevant and up to date.

The new tools, policies and processes of the Open for Business initiative are changing the regulatory landscape across the Ontario government, helping to ensure ministries continue to work creatively and transparently to reduce unnecessary burden and to find ways to make business-to-government interactions as seamless and cost-effective as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that we are doing in collaboration with business leaders and other stakeholders to help position Ontario as a global leader in reducing barriers to business, and proud of the great strides we have made in developing clusters in important sectors like financial services and information and communication technologies.

The proposed legislation will further support the development of established and emerging clusters to enhance the level of innovation and productivity of industry in Ontario. The Better Business Climate Act, if passed, will help us build better partnerships between government and businesses, et une meilleure qualité de vie pour tous les Ontariens.

I encourage every member of this House to support our bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity, as our party's critic for the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, to respond briefly to the minister's speech this morning, as well as to the remarks of the parliamentary assistant to the ministry, the member for Ottawa-Orléans, leading off the debate on Bill 7.

I listened quite closely to what was said by the minister and the parliamentary assistant. Of course, the context of this debate is that it follows the fall economic statement that we all listened to yesterday, the Ontario

economic outlook and fiscal review. While Bill 7, of course, is important, I think it's important to talk about the economic context in which it's presented.

We heard the minister, in his remarks this morning, say that we have a strong and dynamic economy in the province of Ontario. I think we all see strengths in the economy in the province of Ontario and in our own individual ridings. But, obviously, there are some serious problems out there. The unemployment rate is still 6.5%, which is way too high for the province of Ontario, historically. It has come down to where the national average has been, but for 90 months it was above the national average. I would certainly acknowledge that that's good news for those who have gotten jobs in the last month, but at the same time, there are serious economic concerns.

We learned yesterday that there is a \$509-million revenue shortfall in relation to what was presented to this House just back in July by the Minister of Finance, suggesting that there would be \$118.9 billion in revenue this year. Of course, just in the last four months, apparently, \$509 million has evaporated.

I would like to ask the minister, in his response, how does he explain this? What happened? Why are the revenues drying up? Why did they introduce a budget four months ago, claiming that there would be revenues of \$118.9 billion, and yesterday we learned it's \$509 million less than that? I think the people of Ontario deserve answers to those questions this morning.

0940

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize now, for further questions and comments, the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer some comments on the presentation from the minister and the member from Ottawa-Orléans on the Better Business Climate Act.

I want to share with this Legislature that in my community of London, Ontario, we have a thriving digital media cluster that has grown of its own accord. It now employs 8,000 people in our city and is bringing new life into our community with the kind of young talent who is attracted to our city to work in these digital media firms. But, at the same time, London has lost 30,000 positions since 2008, since the collapse of the manufacturing sector. So while the language that's included in the bill about clusters is good, and it's great that the government is indicating an interest in doing something to support clusters, a lot more needs to be done to get our economy moving.

The other point I wanted to make is that to really support these kinds of new economy clusters we need more focus on other aspects of what makes a thriving community. Walkability—transit infrastructure is absolutely vital, because many of these young people who want to work in these new-economy firms don't have cars. They want to walk to work; they want to take public transit to

work. So we need strong investments in infrastructure to enable the growth of these cluster sectors.

We also need investments in arts and culture. People want cultural amenities that they can enjoy—these young people who are attracted to these kinds of firms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Beaches—East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be recognized in this House by yourself or other Speakers who sit in that chair. But I'm delighted for the opportunity to stand here in support of Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act. This is a tremendous step forward for innovation in the province of Ontario.

I've had the pleasure in my past world as a consultant to be involved in numerous clusters assisting companies in their development of new products, particularly in the environmental world and in sustainability issues up in Downsview. The minister of—I always get this wrong, too—of economic development, employment and immigration—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Infrastructure.

Mr. Arthur Potts: And infrastructure. Sorry. That's right: infrastructure. Thank you.

He talked about the Downsview project becoming an aerospace cluster up there. I've had the pleasure to assist a number of companies in the Downsview community as part of a cluster in sustainable development of new technologies, environmental technologies—in vermiculture, for instance: in having worms eating Toronto's organic waste and creating worm castings, which are great for planting soil, remediation and such.

I worked with a company that was collecting vegetable oil from restaurants all over the city of Toronto and turning that into a bio-diesel product which had a very low carbon impact. It was a tremendous way of taking a waste product and turning it into valuable fuels.

We know that in clusters, people gather, they collaborate, to compete to make sure that we are moving forward. There are other tremendous parks: up in Dundalk, for instance, where they're bringing in companies that can do work in organic composting and other waste-to-energy kinds of opportunities. They are attracting people because they're reducing the burden on industry in order to compete in a way—and this is what this act is going to do. It will reduce more of the burdens so people aren't faced with insurmountable hurdles so they can come forward with great ideas and new technologies—driving jobs, driving growth, driving tax revenues for local municipalities and driving jobs for the province of Ontario.

I'm delighted that we have had a chance to introduce this bill and I hope we'll have the support of all members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think it's really important that we acknowledge the direction that our economy is taking and, on a global level, the direction that all economies are taking.

More and more, we're seeing that developing nations are really tapping into the talent of their populations, of their human resources, in terms of technological advancements, and it's really a knowledge-based economy that we're moving towards. While we absolutely need to bolster our manufacturing sector—we've lost a lot of great jobs and we need to bolster that—we also need to recognize that the new economies that are developing, the countries that are doing so well, are tapping into their talent in terms of innovation. When I look at countries like Korea, and their advancements with very limited resources—if you look at the natural resource capabilities of Korea, they're very limited. However, they've really invested in and developed their technology, they developed their advancements in innovation. That's an area where I find we're not doing enough here in Ontario.

We have a wonderful education system that's very capable of training and developing people who can get engaged in this sector, but we're not doing enough. This is one step, but it's far too little. We need to do a lot more in encouraging young people to get involved in developing their own opportunities, and we need government support to make that happen. We need to ensure that the skills that we develop in our schools and our universities are translating into innovation so that people can develop new ways to expand the economy, expand their ability to be employed, their ability to gain new opportunities in a global market. This is the direction we need to head in, and we need to ensure that there's more done in supporting and fostering this type of climate for our future in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton. Back to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm going to have to petition the Premier to change that title, because too many people are having trouble with it in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to the members for Wellington—Halton Hills, London West, Beaches—East York and Bramalea—Gore—Malton for their very instructive and constructive interventions at this time.

I think one of the things the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton touched on that I will touch on as well is the need to focus on our talent and skills, and how that is a competitive advantage for us. I'll just go through, in the minute and a half that I have left, the last couple of weeks here in the province of Ontario, where we've seen some really good progress made as a result of that talent base: the recent mission to China, where the Premier came back with close to \$1 billion of contracts signed—1,800 potential jobs created through that. One of the leading investments was a high-tech company called Huawei, and they're investing in Ontario because of our talent base.

Not long after that, we made the Honda announcement. The primary reason Honda is investing \$857 billion in Ontario is because we have the best workers anywhere in the world today. That plant is going to be

the first lead plant ever outside of Japan for a new product, the new next-generation Honda Civic. Again, that's because of the talent of that workforce that they have the confidence to invest there.

Our job numbers are up: 37,000 net new jobs last month, well up over half a million net new jobs since the recession—all good news. I think a lot of the investment that has created that is based on the fact that we have one of the most talented, skilled workforces anywhere in the world. Just last week I was with the member from Peterborough announcing 250 jobs in the Peterborough GM plant—again, an investment there that could have gone anywhere—because of our talent in that particular plant. So it is very much about talent, it is very much about working in partnership with our stakeholders, and this legislation helps us to continue to advance those competitive assets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I appreciate this opportunity to speak in the Ontario Legislature this morning in response to the debate that's been initiated on Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, standing in the name of the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. This bill was first introduced in the Legislature in the special summer sitting that we participated in right after the provincial election, and it was first introduced on July 7.

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But as the minister pointed out, correctly, this is an identical bill to one that was introduced in the previous Parliament before the provincial election, Bill 176. What they called at that time the Better Business Climate Act, 2014, was introduced by the former Minister of Economic Development. There was an initiation of debate on that bill, but that, of course, was before the government decided to call the election, pulling the plug on the previous Parliament.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Arnott: That's exactly what happened. I saw it happen on TV. As a matter of fact, the New Democrat leader indicated that she would not be supporting the budget, and then the Premier made, quite frankly, a political and pragmatic decision to seek the dissolution of the House. The Premier called the election. The Premier asked the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the House, and that's something that I think all members need to understand.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in our province's prospects because I believe in our people. Working together, I believe that we can seize the opportunities of the future and get Ontario back on track and build a better future for our children and grandchildren. That is really the reason I ran again in the most recent provincial election. I've had the privilege of serving here for a number of years, and that is the main reason why I decided to seek re-election. I was very pleased and honoured to again receive the trust and the support of my constituents. I wanted to start

off with that positive comment as we begin this debate on Bill 7.

Of course, Bill 7 is an effort on the part of the government to demonstrate that they care about small business, that they are making an effort to reduce burdens on small business.

They call the first schedule of the proposed act the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, where they say that the Minister of Economic Development will present an annual report on what they're doing to reduce burdens on small business.

The second schedule in the act is, of course, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, again suggesting that the government wants to encourage the establishment of economic clusters in the province. We heard the minister, in his speech, talk about some of the economic clusters that he admitted have been in large part formed and originated because of the leadership of the business community, as well as, I would argue, the academic community in those areas, but it can be facilitated and encouraged by government. Certainly there is a role for government in that respect.

I think some of this thinking goes back to some of the work that was done by Michael Porter, who was a Harvard-trained academic. I think he still teaches at Harvard, or did at the time. In the early 1990s he wrote an interesting report about economic clusters and how government could be helpful in facilitating those. As far as it goes, we support that in our caucus. We believe that's advantageous, obviously. But we would question, still, why does the government need to introduce a bill requiring the minister to do this? Why can't the minister just do this? Why can't he just release a report on what the government is doing or may not be doing to reduce the burdens on small business? Why can't the minister just release a report on what they're doing to encourage economic clusters and develop the plans? I don't believe he needs legislation to undertake this work, and I don't think anybody in this House believes that either. But the government wants to be seen to be doing something, and so here we have Bill 7.

I certainly do want to acknowledge and thank the representatives from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business who are here. They have done an extraordinary job over the years. They're a strong voice for small business. There are a number of other organizations, of course, that get into this particular line of work, but I think the CFIB is the leader in terms of supporting and encouraging small business and advocating for small business, whether it be in the Ontario Legislature, whether it be in our local municipalities or whether it be with respect to the government of Canada. I think they've done an outstanding job through the years. Through the years that I've been privileged to serve here, I've met some outstanding people who have done good work for the CFIB.

Red tape has been a concern of the CFIB for many years, and not just the CFIB. When I talk to small business people in any of the communities in the riding of

Wellington-Halton Hills, or before that Waterloo—Wellington, or before that the riding of Wellington—my first riding—the concern that small business people have about red tape and regulation always comes up in the course of conversations about what the provincial government can do to help. I think that obviously we need, as a provincial Legislature and throughout the government, including all the agencies, to be cognizant of the fact that small business people, in many cases, are single proprietors or have fewer than 10 employees. They don't have a lot of time to deal with government's expectations, government forms, government regulations. They are focusing on growing their business. They're focusing on trying to serve their customers, exceed their customers' expectations, and expand their business so that hopefully they can make a profit. There's nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker. I know there are some parties in this Legislature that might think there is, but there isn't. That's how the market economy works, and we should encourage and support our small business people to the greatest extent possible.

Over the course of the last 11 years, this government has added layer upon layer of red tape, and we all know the examples. They seem to look at these regulations in isolation, as opposed to looking at the cumulative effect that's impacting our small business people. Of course, the net result is that our small business people feel that they're being strangled by red tape. Again, that is something that the CFIB has been talking about for years. It has intensified under this government, going back to 2003. Now the government would have us believe that they're going to start studying what they're doing, studying the impact and then putting it out in a public forum, I guess, and then, without committing to what they're going to do about it, at least quantifying it and then publishing it.

Again, as far as it goes, that's helpful, but it's not as far as we need it to go. Certainly, our caucus believes that greater steps have to be undertaken by this provincial government to look at the cumulative impact of red tape and try to find ways to reduce it so as to allow small business to unleash its potential and create new jobs. We know that with a high unemployment rate of 6.5%, albeit somewhat lower than it has been in recent months—in the last 90 months or so, our unemployment rate has been higher than the national average, which is an embarrassment for the province of Ontario and something that, unfortunately, the government seemed to be oblivious about for so long. At least it is good news that the unemployment rate has finally come down to the national average—good news for the families who now have jobs, good news for the province of Ontario, but I would again argue that our unemployment rate is far too high. With the right economic approach, we should have an unemployment rate of between 2% and 3% in the province of Ontario nine years after the financial crisis of 2008-09. We really should have an unemployment rate between 2% and 3% after the years that have passed since the economic downturn. If the government thinks they can

crow about this, and if they think they can pat themselves on the back and people are going to be excited with a 6.5% unemployment rate, they are sorely mistaken, Mr. Speaker.

There has been some good economic news in my riding, though, that I want to inform the House about, because it was recently announced, actually in October, that a manufacturing concern in Fergus called Nexans, which is a cable manufacturer, is going to be investing \$15 million in a plant expansion. The plant has been there for many, many years; I visited it many times. They're going to expand their footprint by 132,000 square feet, which I think is about a 50% increase in their size. We hope that leads to retained jobs in the province of Ontario and in our community of Fergus, as well as an expansion of jobs, but this is something that the company went ahead and did without any provincial government support in terms of a grant from any of the government's funding programs.

We see that some of these companies are going ahead and making announcements and investments without the direct assistance of the government. We know the government likes to be involved in these photo ops and, in many cases, writes big cheques like the \$80-million cheque that went to Honda. The minister even acknowledged today that the reason the investment took place by Honda was because we have the best workers in the world, and that's why Honda decided to invest over \$800 million in the Alliston plant, but the government chips in \$80 million, about one tenth, so that the Premier can be there for the photo op, so that people will think the Premier had something to do with it.

Mr. Todd Smith: Expensive photo op.

Mr. Ted Arnott: It's a very expensive photo op. That is, of course, taxpayers' money, which the government would like us to forget about too.

The fact is, many of these companies see opportunities in spite of everything that's going on. I would still argue that there would be more companies expanding, more companies investing if indeed the government took the right economic approach. But there is some positive news out there. I want to encourage that in my riding and do whatever I can to support these companies that are willing to expand in spite of what I would argue is still a very negative investment climate in the province of Ontario, largely because of the actions of this particular government.

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During my response to the minister when he gave his speech initiating this debate and I had the two-minute response opportunity, I felt I had to talk about the economic climate that this bill is being presented in in the province of Ontario. Of course, yesterday we heard from the Minister of Finance, who gave his fall economic statement, the Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. Again, I think it's important that we think about the economic climate that this bill is presented in and look at some of the key numbers that were presented yesterday in this House by the Minister of Finance, some

of which, I think, were finally picked up by the *Globe and Mail*. The headline today says, on the front page, "Ontario Fades; Alberta Rises," and there's a big graphic of Ontario with all the red Liberal ink that we see on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* today, talking about the \$12.5-billion deficit. This has been something that we've been warning about for years now in this Legislature, asking the government to get control of its spending so as to ensure that spending doesn't cause a huge increase in the debt. As we know, the debt has doubled in the last 11 years. But some of the key numbers that I think people need to know about and need to understand: For the current fiscal year—meaning from April 1, 2014, to the end of March 2015—the deficit that they're projecting is still \$12.5 billion.

If you break that down, they're borrowing about \$1 billion a month. All of that is money that is borrowed, that somebody is going to have to pay for some day. In the meantime, we have to service it; we have to pay the interest. It's an absolutely staggering amount of money, but because of these years and years of high deficits, unfortunately, I think some of us have become hardened to these numbers. But the fact is, we're still on the road to insolvency. We're not, maybe, racing towards insolvency; it's not going to happen next year, but if we stay on this path, the province of Ontario will not be able to service its debt and its obligations.

I should also add that while the government claims to be working towards a balanced budget by 2017-18 and claims to be making progress towards that goal, and the minister reiterated the government's commitment to balance the budget by 2017-18 yesterday in his economic statement, the deficit this year is \$2 billion higher than it was last year. It's higher than it was last year. They're not going in the right direction towards a balanced budget. Last year, it was \$10.5 billion. This year, it is \$12.5 billion—\$2 billion higher than last year.

The projected provincial net debt is an important number because, as we've seen, under the Liberal government over the last 11 years, the debt has doubled. The debt this year, according to the government's own background papers that were presented in this House yesterday, stands at \$287.3 billion. Again, in 2003, when the government took power, the debt was \$139 billion. So in 11 years, we've doubled the debt. Who is going to pay for the debt, Mr. Speaker? We know that it's our children and our grandchildren who will have to pay higher taxes or receive less service because of this government's inability to control its government spending.

Another important number that I think people need to know about from yesterday's statement: The provincial government spending for the current fiscal year—again, the first of April of this year to the end of March of next year, 2015—is going to be \$130.2 billion. That number is up considerably from last year. The government would have us believe that they're holding the line on spending. In fact, last year they spent \$126.4 billion. This year, they plan to spend \$130.2 billion—almost \$4 billion more than last year.

Another important number is the net debt per capita. This, in effect, is what each Ontarian owes because of years of government overspending. Every man, woman and child who lives in Ontario, in effect, is on the hook for this amount of money. This year—this is from the background papers—it is \$21,003, and that's just the provincial debt that each and every Ontarian is on the hook for. That number is up from \$11,339 in 2003. Our population has grown quite dramatically since 2003, but it's also true that the net debt per capita—in effect, the amount that each Ontarian owes because of years of government overspending—has almost doubled over that period of time.

Another important number in yesterday's fall economic statement is the interest payments on the debt. This is an obligation that the government has to pay first if it's going to be able to borrow money. It has to service its outstanding debt. This year, the number is \$10.8 billion. Looking at future years—and of course, the economic statement presents some speculation on future years. They go out, of course, to 2017-18, the year that they claim they're going to balance the budget. The projection in the fall economic statement of what it will cost to service the debt by 2017-18 is \$13.9 billion, which is up about \$3 billion from what we're going to be spending this year. So each year, as our debt grows, our debt service costs grow as well.

The government has been fortunate—we've all been fortunate—with low interest rates in recent years as we tried to encourage the economic recovery and as the Bank of Canada has tried to encourage economic recovery. But the fact is, as the deficit and the debt continue, the cost of servicing the outstanding debt will continue to grow. We would anticipate and expect that, at some point in the future, interest rates are going to rise. When that happens, the debt servicing costs will explode, and then we'll be in real trouble.

Again, this is all going to happen in the next few years. Whether or not this government is going to be in power in 2017-18, no one knows. But they are leaving a legacy of debt that is absolutely staggering for the next government, whoever it is, and the next generations.

This is something that, unfortunately, the Liberal members do not want to talk about. I don't know if all of them understand it, Mr. Speaker. I have a feeling that many of them don't, but I think it would be helpful to some of them if the Minister of Finance would actually tell his caucus colleagues the whole truth of the situation, the finances of the province, and what the province faces in terms of choices, because we are on the road to insolvency. There is no disputing that. If we can deviate from this course, there is still time, perhaps, to avoid that fate. But the current trends and the current direction that the government is following are leading us to financial insolvency, and it's something that should concern all of us.

I would now like to talk about the actual bill that's before the House, Bill 7. Of course we know that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been

involved in the drafting of the legislation and has encouraged the government to do this. Again, I want to acknowledge that.

In detail, this is an omnibus bill that deals with two separate activities.

Schedule 1, the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, requires the minister to publish an annual report on regulations or burden reduction, if they do anything. A burden is defined as a cost that is measured in "money, time or resources and is considered ... unnecessary to achieve the purpose ... that creates the cost." In other words, they will report on how many unnecessary regulations they have eliminated, if they eliminate any. It also permits the minister to "make regulations respecting the report, which may include regulations" itself, which is kind of interesting.

Schedule 2, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, permits the minister to prepare plans with respect to the development of geographical economic clusters. The minister has the authority to consult with those who have an interest in his plan and amend, review or revoke the plan. The minister can also make regulations about what goes into the plan, decide who will be consulted with and determine how the plan is to be reviewed, revoked and made public.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe and submit to this House the minister could do both of these things right now. He doesn't need a law that compels him to do it. It would probably be in the public interest that he initiate these plans, but he doesn't need the legislation to do it.

This act, we say, does nothing to improve the business climate in Ontario. It does not create any new private sector jobs. It leaves the definition of "burden" to the interpretation of the minister. This will allow the minister to pick and choose examples of what he considers to be burdens while simultaneously providing him with the opportunity to ignore any economic problem that should arise during his mandate.

Red tape burdens, we believe, cost businesses in this province over \$11 billion in lost productivity annually. Think of that number: \$11 billion in lost productivity. That's time and money that could be better spent by small business and medium-sized business and large business servicing their customers, finding new customers and also expanding their businesses, which would create new jobs.

Something I've neglected to point out is a statistic that I've referred to for many years, and I think it's still valid: Coming out of an economic downturn, it is the small business sector that is the largest driver of job creation in the province of Ontario and, I think, in most jurisdictions across Canada. Something like between 65% and 80% of new jobs that have been created through the years after an economic downturn have come from small business. Again, this is the engine of economic growth. This is the sector of economy that, obviously, we need to be paying a lot of attention to.

This bill only provides for reporting on the state of unnecessary regulations or, to use the minister's word,

burdens, but it does not compel the government to reduce any of the burdens, nor does it establish a timeline or process for how these so-called burdens are to be eliminated.

Again, Mr. Speaker, they may come out with a report, say, next year or two years from now. Obviously, if Bill 7 passes, the minister is compelled to do this, and he'll have his staff do a report of some sort. They'll release the report, hopefully, in the public domain and, hopefully, table it in this Legislature. But there's absolutely no requirement upon the government to do anything about it.

So if we have a minister who wants to reduce red tape and burdens, in theory, in the future, perhaps he or she will have this report, will be able to take it to their cabinet colleagues and try to use it to try and encourage, whether it be the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Labour or which other ministry—the Minister of Natural Resources. If there are outdated regulations that are no longer relevant, he or she will be able to try and use that as a persuasive tool. But there's absolutely no requirement upon the government to do anything about these reports.

That is, again, a weakness and drawback of this bill and, quite frankly, I think, something that needs to be addressed in committee. I would hope that we can see this bill go to committee, if it passes second reading, and bring forward those kinds of amendments. I would hope that the government will listen to them. If this bill is going to have any impact or be effective, they will have to listen to what we've got to say on that point.

The second part of the bill, schedule 2, may actually exacerbate the problem that is trying to be solved by the first part; that's a point that we make. I hope that's not the case, but at the same time, it's possible that the two schedules are conflicting and the so-called solution in the first part might create a problem in the second part.

We also say that this bill gives the mandate for economic planning and established a bureaucratic burden to the economic planning process.

We believe that this bill could go much further and does not go far enough to address the issues surrounding the burden of red tape in this province. I say again that the red tape burden costs businesses in this province \$11 billion a year in lost productivity annually. Real action is necessary on this issue. The bill only requires the minister to review the state of burdens in the Ontario economy every five years, and it does not compel the minister to reduce any of the burdens, as I've said before, or establish a process to access and eliminate the burdens.

The second part of the bill actually may accentuate the problem that's trying to be solved by the first part, as I said earlier. The Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act is designed to legislate the government's involvement in the planning and organization of geographic economies. It gives the government the mandate to plan and consult on, as well as amend and revoke, economic planning. It reduces economic flexibility—a bureaucratic burden to the economic planning process. It will be a handcuff to business and prevent them from properly responding to the dynamic of the flexibility of the marketplace.

Those are some of the concerns. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that those concerns can be addressed over the course of this debate and through the committee hearings. But certainly, on first blush, these are some of the concerns that our caucus has.

I see that it's almost 10:15, and I'm shortly running out of time. But, Mr. Speaker, there are still approximately 35 hours—35 minutes to go in my presentation—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: It may seem like 35 hours.

But the fact is, I'm looking forward to when this bill is next called for debate. I'm hoping I can be here. I'll have the floor, and I will be able to continue my comments on Bill 7.

I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your interest this morning in my comments.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we begin introductions—I suspect that we have quite a few to make—I'll remind members: Please, just introduce your guests and maybe their title, and we'll get through all of them today. We also have to introduce a special group today.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to introduce some friends to this Legislature: Matt Hiraishi and Doug DeRabbie, who are with the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Of course, we welcome their entire group today.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to welcome representatives from the College Student Alliance: Sarah Ryrie from St. Clair SRC—she's the president—and Olivia Bauer, who is St. Clair SRC vice-president of downtown affairs.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm absolutely delighted to welcome a delegation today led by Xie Changjun, vice-president of China Guodian Corp., and Mr. Huang Qun, executive director and vice-president of the China Longyuan Power Group. Mr. Xie and Mr. Huang are here today with senior executives from China Guodian Corp., the China Longyuan Power Group and Longyuan Canada Renewables Ltd. Many of these representatives are visiting Ontario all the way from China. Ni hao, and welcome.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to welcome the representatives from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. In the gallery we have Ralph Palumbo, regional vice-president for Ontario; Doug DeRabbie, Matt Hiraishi, Karyn Hamilton and Brian Shephard. I thank them for visiting Queen's Park and I encourage all members to attend the insurance bureau reception in room 228 later this evening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker. I know you'll be introducing the pages later, but I'm very excited that the page captain today is Albany Sutherland from Thunder Bay—Superior North, who's also a proud resident of Marten Falls First Nation. We've got a number of people here to see Albany do her work: her mother, Denise Baxter; her grandfather, Lawrence Baxter; and some close friends, Alexa McKinnon and Libby Stephenson.

While I'm at it, I also want to introduce the interim chief of Marten Falls First Nation, Bruce Achneepineskum. Let's welcome them all here today.

Mr. Michael Harris: I have Jeff Scherer from Conestoga Students Inc., as well as Katie Turriff from Conestoga. Jeff is the president. Katie is on the board of directors. They're here with the College Student Alliance today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have visitors all the way from Sudbury, from Cambrian College: Brandon Guertin, who is the president of the student association; and Jennifer Toomer, who is the vice-president. Give a good southern welcome to those northern people.

Hon. Mario Sergio: From sunny Sicily and the town of Cattolica Eraclea, we have the mayor, Dottore Nicolò Termine. We have the president of the Cattolica Eraclea Social Club here in Toronto, Peter Borsellino; and Mr. Dominic Campione and Mr. Anthony Avola. I wish them a good stay in the House today.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to welcome a constituent from my riding. She's here with the College Student Alliance. I'd like to welcome Robyn Phillips from St. Lawrence College in Brockville. She's the president of their student association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today, from Ajax, page Haniah Igbal and her mother, Kubra Mir, who is in the east gallery—such a young-looking lady that you almost would think they're sisters. I welcome you.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to introduce to the Legislature this morning two very engaging young ladies from St. Clair College in Windsor, Ontario: Olivia Bauer and Sarah Ryrie. Congratulations. Thank you for coming and making the trip all the way.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'd like to welcome Rob Williams from Fleming College, Peterborough campus. Rob is the president of the student association there.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to introduce page Joshua Liao's mom who is here, Michele Curry. She's in the west members' gallery and is down for the month while her son is acting as a page here at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Michael Chan: Today I would like to welcome the Target department store government affairs team, who travelled here from Canada and the US. Their names are Matt, Amy, Isaac, Yanis, Irene, Thad, Onika, Mila, Adriana, Jennifer and Rajesh. Welcome to Canada.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Matthew Stewart, president of the Fanshawe College student union as well as president of the College Student Alliance. He's joining us in the west gallery with leaders from student unions across the province of Ontario. Please welcome them.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my very great pleasure to welcome April Singleton this morning, who is the mother of page captain Jared Singleton, both from Cambridge. Welcome.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased today to welcome the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. They do a fantastic job advocating for cancer patients and survivors. They are here today at Queen's Park to raise awareness about metastatic prostate cancer and the financial, emotional and health costs of this disease on patients and their families. In particular, I would like to welcome Jackie Manthorne, Sapna Mahajan and Tiffany Glover. Please welcome them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The member from Barrie.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): She took it from you. Okay. Sorry.

The Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to welcome Deepika Gangwani, who is the president of the student association at Centennial College.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Tiffany Glover, who is in the House today. Tiffany worked very hard along with me to give me the opportunity to represent my community of Ottawa Centre in this great Legislature. I thank Tiffany and welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome Matthew Stewart, president, and all the folks from the College Student Alliance as well, but also, we have in the audience today members of the Canadian Steel Producers Association. Welcome to Queen's Park as well.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Once again, I'm very pleased to welcome Dr. Brian Stevenson, president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead University. Brian, welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome the mother of page Hannah Hamilton, Jennifer Hamilton; her brother Jake Hamilton; and family friend Payne Crighton. They are on their way in, I believe, at the moment.

Mr. Paul Miller: I also would like to introduce and welcome the steel producers. Being in the steel business for over 30 years, I certainly can relate to what they're going through right now. Welcome.

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to introduce Brenda Stenta and Kalyan Ghosh, the CEO of Essar Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, a great steel town in northern Ontario, and as well, welcome the steel manufacturers to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery, we have with us today Matthew Thornton, a former intern of mine, and the Brant representatives of

the Ontario Real Estate Association. A warm welcome to my visitors from Brant. Thank you for being here.

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LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a joyous task of asking our pages to assemble to be introduced as our new group of pages for this round, so if the pages could assemble, please.

From Scarborough Southwest, Kate Beverly; from Carleton-Mississippi Mills, Kelsey Clark; from York West, Jenny Doan; from Perth-Wellington, Nicole Eaton; from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, Elijah French; from Durham, Hannah Hamilton; from Welland, Vida Han; from Ajax-Pickering, Haniah Iqbal; from Hamilton Mountain, Steven Kottaras; from Ottawa South, Moiz Lakhani; from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Joshua Liao; from Richmond Hill, Johann Muthukumaraswamy; from Chatham-Kent-Essex, Mikaila Nouhra; from Simcoe-Grey, Nicholas Sammon; from Mississauga-Brampton South, Ethan Sequeira; from Cambridge, Jared Singleton; from Thunder Bay-Superior North, Albany Sutherland; from Etobicoke Centre, Maja Toman; from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Claudia Velimirovic; from Brampton West, Tyler Vis; from Burlington, Ella Walsh; from Oakville, Noah Westwater; and from Don Valley East, Nicholas Zalewski.

These are our pages for this round. Thank you very much.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the members for their patience in introductions. If we continue to simply make the names available, we'll get through all of our introductions with guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Premier. Premier, I listened to the fall economic statement yesterday, and while I appreciate a nice story with a happy ending, this isn't the time or place for fiction. You continue to rely on rosy assumptions about the growth of our economy in spite of the half-a-billion-dollar shortfall you announced yesterday, and in the face of a flagging economic outlook globally.

In just the last few weeks, we've learned Japan and Italy are officially in recession. Germany struggled to grow its economy by 0.1% last quarter, and China's growth is continuing to slow. Yesterday, UK Prime Minister David Cameron cautioned that, "red warning lights are once again flashing on the dashboard of the global economy."

Premier, how can you expect the people of Ontario to believe that you'll balance the budget without raising

their taxes when you keep overestimating revenue and won't stop spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the global context that the member opposite has painted, and those are realities that we are contending with, but we have a plan and we are executing the plan that we ran on. That plan is multi-faceted; it is not one thing.

The party opposite had one song that they sang during the election campaign. Their only thought was to cut and slash, fire people and cut services. That is not a plan; that is a recipe for disaster.

What we have said is that we have to make investments that will allow for job growth now and in the future, and economic support for communities in the future. We have said we have to constrain spending, and we have a program review in place that is going to allow us to do that. And we've said we have to partner with the private sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: I know you don't have a background in business or experience meeting a payroll, but let me tell you this: A small business that grows its debt—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Start the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Premier, a small business that grows its debt year after year wouldn't get back in the black just by raising its prices and cracking down on kids pocketing a few candy bars.

It's clear that much more fundamental change is needed in this province. The debt is nearly \$300 billion, and you, Premier, are paying \$29 million a day just to service the debt.

Premier, can you tell us exactly how this government is going to significantly reduce spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say to the member opposite that I believe that government and society need leadership that brings life experience to those roles, that allows for a complex solution to complex problems. That's what leadership is.

Confronted with a complex problem—I would just remind the member opposite that, actually, the government of Ontario is not a small business. The government of Ontario is a government responsible for the life and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The government of Ontario is responsible for the life and livelihood of 13.6 million people in this province. It is a complex enterprise; it's a complex society. The plan that we have to review the programs and transform this government, to manage compensation costs, to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes and to unlock the value of the assets

that belong to the people of Ontario—that's the complexity that we bring to this task.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: With no real intention to get spending under control, you have said that you will rely on cigarettes to balance the books. You have presented strengthening revenue integrity as if it was a revolutionary idea, but in fact it's simply an admission that your government has failed to protect tax dollars. Either you have been unable or unwilling to enforce these laws, properly collect taxes, or deliver on old promises to crack down on contraband tobacco.

If in fact there is significant revenue to be found from stopping this "revenue leakage," as you call it, how many millions or billions of dollars has this government lost over the last decade by failing to enforce its own laws?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I understand that the questions that are written down, and the decisions that are made about the way the questions are going to go, are made before question period. But I really think that this is an important discussion that we should be having about how we solve a problem that, quite frankly, we are all in together, as the member opposite outlined.

There are global forces that we are all dealing with. We have put in place a plan that, yes, speaks to making sure that there is revenue integrity, that the revenue that should be coming into the provincial coffers comes into the provincial coffers, while at the same time making sure that we pay attention to the economic development of all our communities across the province.

If the member opposite looks at the work that we have done, for example in the Ministry of Health, over the last number of years and at the transformation that has taken place, the way spending has been constrained, the way costs have been controlled and the limits on growth that we have put in place there, he would understand what's possible.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My next question is for the Premier. In 2010, the Liberal government of the day, of which you were the Minister of Education, retracted its controversial plans to introduce a new sex education curriculum in our schools and promised to widely consult with parents before attempting another sex ed revision.

But, Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, you will come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Just a few weeks ago, your Minister of Education suddenly announced that there would be a new sex education curriculum in place for the 2015 school year, and yet there have been no meaningful consultations with Ontario parents on this issue.

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My question this morning, Premier, is very simple: Why have you decided to break the 2010 Liberal promise to consult with parents before reintroducing new changes to Ontario's sex education curriculum?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Quite the contrary: We have followed through on that commitment, and the Minister of Education has announced a process whereby parents across the province will be consulted.

Interjection: No, they're not.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I will just say that the notion that the chair of the school council, the representative of the school council, somehow doesn't have access to the school population just demonstrates how little this party opposite actually understands about how education works.

To that life experience point that I made earlier: I've been the chair of a school council, I've been a school trustee and I've worked in community. I understand that the role of a school council chair is to talk to the people in his or her school, to get that input and then to feed that input into a process. That's how it works.

We promised we would consult with parents. That's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: One carefully selected, hand-picked parent per school—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —represents only 4,000 parents out of millions of Ontario parents. That's barely 1% of parents, Premier. This is not consultation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: For the minister to suggest—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education, come to order.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —that such a covert process constitutes a meaningful consultation is an insult to the intelligence of parents right across this province. It is simply smoke and mirrors, Premier.

Premier, when will you reveal the contents of the new Liberal sex education curriculum so all parents in the province can see for themselves what you have planned for their children?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll just quickly answer the first part of that question and say that what is an insult to the people of the province, and particularly to the hard-working volunteers in all of the schools in this province, is that this member wouldn't understand that those volunteer roles are extremely important, that they do connect with the parents in their schools, and that they have a very important role to play. He really should learn that, if he's going to be able to represent his schools.

I want to say something else—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to say something else, Mr. Speaker, to the second part of the question. I believe that what this is really about is that this member wants to once again undermine the very real need for a strong, updated and modern sex education, physical and health education curriculum in our schools.

I would think, given the issues we have dealt with as a society in the last few weeks, that he would have begun to understand that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Even this flimsy promise to consult the tiny, hand-picked, select group of parents is a farce.

On Thursday, October 30, your Minister of Education suggested that it was unlikely that any feedback, even from these people, would have an impact on your Liberal government—

Hon. Liz Sandals: I didn't pick them. Parents picked them. I have no idea what they're going to say.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The Minister of Education will come to order.

Please finish.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Premier, this is another Liberal broken promise, another example of Liberal contempt for voters and parents in the province of Ontario.

Premier, it seems you are afraid of telling parents what you intend to teach their children. Why don't you simply release the details of the proposed Liberal sex education curriculum now? Premier, what are you trying to hide?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here is my advice to the member opposite in answer to his question, and that is to go to the schools in his riding to talk to the elected chairs of the school councils—because they are elected by the parents in the school—and to have a conversation with them about what they think should be in the physical and health education curriculum, because that is the consultation that we're doing.

I just want to point out that there are members of this party that have called for a select committee to look into sexual harassment and sexual assault. I have said that I'm open to making changes and that that's a conversation that House leaders can have. But that flies in the face of what this member is doing, which undermines—if he doesn't think that at a select committee we would hear how important it is for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. It goes both ways.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not getting quiet for people to take their last cheap shots. It's reached a point of regret for me.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In any discussion about the needs for children to learn about sexual harassment and sexual assault, there will be, and necessarily, a discussion about health and physical education curriculum

in schools. Those two things are necessarily linked, Mr. Speaker.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Liberal government released its fall economic statement. Ontario's bank account is short half a billion dollars. The Liberals are slashing 6% out of nearly every ministry, and now we're finding out that they are short on revenues.

What is the Premier going to do to cover the losses, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party understands our plan and understands the fiscal underpinnings of our plan, because she ran on that plan, Mr. Speaker. She understands that we have a path to balance. She understands that we are looking at our assets to make sure that they are working for the people of Ontario. She understands that we are constraining compensation. And she understands that we are working to transform the programs, as we have done across government. We will continue to do so, to make sure that we are providing the services that people in this province need, but that we are providing them in the most cost-effective way possible, and at the same time making investments that will allow the economy to thrive, those investments in transportation infrastructure, in transit, roads and bridges around the province that we know communities need in order to draw business.

That's the plan. I know she's aware of it because, as I say, she ran on it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when the government released its fall update, we found out that Liberal mismanagement has left revenues \$5 billion lower than projected since the 2010 budget. But instead of looking for ways to ensure that we can actually pay the bills, the Liberals are handing a brand new tax loophole to corporations so that they can write off the HST on Leafs tickets and the company car. Steve Orsini, former Deputy Minister of Finance and now the Premier's secretary of cabinet, says that this loophole will cost \$750 million annually.

Now, when we're falling short on revenues and we're slashing services to people, does the Premier really think it's wise to open up a new corporate tax loophole?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance will want to speak to the specifics, but again, let me say that we presented our fall economic statement yesterday to the people of the province and we are very confident, given what has been happening in the province, given that our unemployment rate is at 6.5%—that's the lowest rate since October 2008—given that those jobs are 90% full-time jobs, 37,000 net new jobs last month in October. The fact is that we are seeing an uptick. Absolutely, there are challenges ahead of us and we have acknowledged that, but we have a plan. We understand that there have to be constraints, and

at the same time we must make those investments that will allow the economy to thrive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, another way to increase revenues is certainly to grow the economy, but we've learned that the Liberals will be missing their growth targets that they just set five months ago, pre-election. That didn't take long, now, did it? We won't hit the growth targets in any of the next four years coming. That's what that economic statement said: four more years of lost revenues, four more years of slashed services. Does the Premier really think her plan is working?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. I understand that the member opposite is talking about our path to balance and our stimulus package. Both combine to achieve the positive results that are necessary. She referenced the fact that revenues are down by half a billion dollars, which is correct, noted earlier, because of global forces. And what have we done? We've recalibrated and reassessed it to ensure that we continue to balance and we meet our targets.

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But the member opposite is basing her assumptions on our platform. Now, I know it's difficult for her to read more than nine pages, as she has written on hers. Ours is a little bit more complex than that. It's fully detailed and it's out there for all, to be used and recognized. We will achieve our target. We're balancing our books by 2017-18, and we're stimulating growth as necessary.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, we certainly didn't include billions of dollars of new corporate tax loopholes in our plan.

My next question is to the Premier. In yesterday's economic statement, the government has admitted for the very first time that they will not meet—that they didn't meet, in fact—their 8% auto insurance premium reduction. Now they're saying that the rates may come down 6%.

The election is over. The government has been backing away, in this economic statement, from the promise that they made just a few months ago to reduce rates by 15%. Is the Premier going to keep her promise to reduce those rates by 15%? Or is this fall economic statement really an admission that they're going to go nowhere near 15%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, the Minister of Finance will want to speak on the specifics, but let me just be clear: What we have said in the fall economic statement and what we have said consistently is that auto insurance rates are down. They have already come down. We are already seeing success and we will continue to work to make sure that we reach those targets. But the fact is that the work that we have done so far and the changes that have been made have already produced results.

The fact is that the members opposite need to look at the legislation that we've brought forward because in that legislation are the mechanisms to remove fraud from the system to make further changes that will continue to bring auto insurance, on average, down across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the fall economic statement the government appears to be backing away from their promise to cut auto insurance rates by 15%. That's the bottom line. They're using something called the annual Automobile Insurance Transparency and Accountability Expert Report as the reason why they're backing away. But this report is so transparent that it's being kept from the public.

Can the Premier explain why her transparency report that underpins her economic statement and her broken promise on auto insurance is being kept from the public?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's pretty rich, I've got to tell you. We're in the midst of trying to look at legislation on auto insurance which the member opposite and her team voted against. They voted against the very measures to reduce auto insurance further. Had we taken the steps, as we proposed, months ago, we would have reduced auto insurance even more. Notwithstanding, a lot of insurance rates are down—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton—Lawrence will come to order and the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Auto insurance rates are down on average by 6% because of the measures we've taken to date. We need to do more. We need to do the necessary work around fighting fraud. We have to go against dispute resolution systems. We're looking also at a number of issues around the tow truck industry and a number of initiatives that will enable us to reduce costs in the courts. That was necessary months ago. They stopped it. They delayed it. They voted against it. We're going to make sure it gets passed now and reduce rates even further.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, in fact, what they've done is they've taken away people's rights to sue and have justice in terms of auto insurance disputes.

The economic statement has real impacts on people across Ontario. Our growth is not keeping up. That means losing out on over \$1 billion worth of jobs, investments and prosperity. Bills are going up for hydro, and they're not coming down for auto. People are wondering if they're going to be facing more cuts and more privatized services because the Liberals have emptied the piggy bank.

Does the Premier still think her plan is progressive?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite ran on our platform, said that she's going to the find \$600 mil-

lion more in savings and in cuts to health care and education that she said she would be able to find, and now she's saying, "Well, we don't want to do that either." You can't have it both ways.

We are taking the steps necessary to transform government through the work that the President of the Treasury Board is doing now. We're going to make certain that we provide for open and collective agreements that honour and respect the rights of others, but ensuring that we have net zero so that we can all be in this together. We're going to continue investing in those matters that are important to Ontarians, to promote and increase our growth.

Mr. Speaker, she makes reference to tax loopholes, which is wrong. We have revenue leakage that we are attacking. But what she makes reference to is incorrect. She knows that fully well, that we need the federal government's support in those initiatives, that we do not have. We're fighting hard for Ontario. She should fight hard for Ontario as well, instead of putting them down and making—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

The Bank of Canada and the Conference Board of Canada both forecast that you would not make your revenue numbers this year. But you didn't listen to the experts, and you put a high revenue number in your budget. Well—surprise—the experts were right again and you were wrong again. Revenues came in half a billion dollars lower than you told us they would be, and that was only four months ago. You raided our reserves again—\$300 million more out of the piggy bank—so it doesn't look as bad as it really is.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has concluded that "we are likely to reach a state of crisis unless the province cuts spending and changes the way it does business."

Premier, will you please listen to the experts in the financial community and finally change the way you do business in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is completely inaccurate, and I'll tell you why. We have independent economists around the world and across Canada assessing the degree of revenue that would be achieved.

In fact, last year we had Don Drummond look at the integrity of the revenue numbers that were projected by independent economists outside of government. We took those projections and pared them down even further. We were below their projected amount, and even still, we were able to use the shock absorbers that have been built into the system—that's why they exist—and it's also why we're borrowing \$24 billion less and have \$200 million lower in interest costs because of the efforts that we're taking to offset these very measures.

We're moving ahead. We're on target to balance the budget by 2017-18 by taking a balanced approach.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, quite a pant-load there.

Premier, we've seen the direct results of your spending spree—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask you to withdraw that.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Carry on.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You've already cut 1,600 nursing jobs; physiotherapy for our seniors; cataract surgeries, and diabetes testing strips. Premier, you're the one holding the knife today.

It's not getting any better. Your own plan shows you need to raise revenue \$15 billion by 2017-18 to balance the budget. But you've missed your revenue targets every single time.

So, Premier, what are you going to do now? Are you going to raise taxes, as mentioned twice yesterday? More health cuts, in addition to the ones you've already done? Or are you going to legislate the wage freeze your finance minister announced in this House yesterday?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we've adopted now over 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations. We've taken measures of austerity in a very pragmatic and appropriate way by transforming government without hampering services, in health care and education especially, and for our social well-being. But as a result of that, we've become the lowest-cost government per capita in Canada. We've done our job in that regard.

What we will not do, though, is cut 100,000 jobs from the system and put people at risk—what he's been implying and what he's been suggesting.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just 140,000 child care spots.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton, come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Instead, we have a net increase of 500,000 net new jobs since the recession. We have recovered the 300,000, plus 500,000 more. Unemployment right now in Ontario is 6.5%, 1% lower than last year.

We're continuing to do what's necessary to promote the economy, and we continue to manage our program spending as necessary.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. According to the fall economic statement, the first annual Automobile Insurance Transparency and Accountability Expert Report was delivered to the Minister of Finance. The whole point of this annual report was to let the public know why premiums were so high, despite the fact that the insurance industry was saving billions of dollars flowing from the draconian benefit cutbacks of 2010 and subsequent years, but this government has refused to release this so-called transparency report to the public.

Minister, why haven't you released this report to the public? What is in this report that you're so afraid of showing to the millions of drivers in Ontario?

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Hon. Charles Sousa: The real question is, why did you vote against the very bill that would lower auto insurance in the first place? Why were you not standing up for the people of Ontario, the very drivers you claim to be supporting?

We've been able to reduce rates by 6% on average. We can reduce rates even more by imposing and providing the legislation that we brought forward that will be debated in this House, that will be debated at committee and that will enable us to have that discussion which you are trying to avoid.

I've got to tell you, I'm disappointed at the very nature of your question because you, of all people, stood in this House trying to claim to support auto insurance reducing drivers' rates, just like many private members' bills on this side of the House have fought for. We'll continue to do our part. You should be joining us in doing it as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, that's going to make a great quote in Hansard. The minister is disappointed that I asked him to release a transparency report. We're going to definitely quote that in Hansard.

New Democrats have long argued that the insurance industry has pocketed \$2 billion from the 2010 benefit cutbacks without passing a penny on to drivers. That's why we called for a 15% premium rollback, which we thought this government agreed to in the 2013 budget. But it's pretty clear now that they have no intention of implementing it.

Minister, you admitted yesterday that the 15% rate reduction is stalled at 6%, but you didn't say why. What's in the transparency report that you refuse to release? Again, what are you hiding from the eight million drivers in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We have a regulatory system that forces the companies to post online their rates, their activities and the reductions they are proceeding with. There's over 100 companies competing. Almost 20 of them or more are actually well above the 15% reduction in rates already. We encourage that activity to proceed, and that is transparent.

I've got to tell you, the reason why rates are at only 6% is very clear. It's because you stalled the very legislation that enables rates to go down, because you voted against it, because you enabled an election that wasn't necessary. Those are the issues that are creating the slowing of that rate reduction.

We're going to act quickly. We're going to ensure that rates are reduced by taking the actions necessary in this piece of legislation, which I hope you will support in the end.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Fraser: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines.

Just a couple of months ago, the Premier released mandate letters to each minister outlining the key priorities for their ministry. Minister, in your mandate letter, the Premier made it clear that we have made it our government's priority to ensure that Ontario's north continues to realize its potential as a sustainable, diverse, stable and innovative region that significantly contributes to the overall growth of Ontario's economy.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to drive growth in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm very grateful to the member for Ottawa South for that great question. Certainly, it's a complete priority for our government to ensure that our northern communities continue to remain on a positive track towards prosperity. That's one of the reasons why we are continuing to work so hard on the implementation of the northern Ontario growth plan. We're diversifying the economy, helping communities attract investment and building more efficient infrastructure.

The key, we believe, is to take a very collaborative approach. That's why we are directly engaging municipal, aboriginal and community leaders from across northern Ontario. We held a Northern Leaders' Forum in Timmins last December and followed that up with a very positive session in Thunder Bay. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that we are looking forward to continuing that dialogue with another Northern Leaders' Forum happening early in the new year in Sault Ste. Marie—looking forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Minister, for informing the House, informing this Legislature, about the strategic investments our government is making in northern Ontario.

We need to ensure that we continue to support the talent and skills of all Ontarians so that we can build a dynamic business climate in our province, one that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships. I think we would all agree that successful development relies on modern and efficient infrastructure, a vital component of building prosperous communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to improve infrastructure in northern Ontario and support growth across the region?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Another great question—thank you so much. Certainly, we know that infrastructure is absolutely a vital part of realizing the full potential of our northern communities, which is why we're so proud of this last year's investment of \$527 million for northern highways, which was about \$147 million for expansion and \$380 million for rehabilitation—actually, over \$5 billion over the last 10 years. We made a \$32-million investment to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure to 21 First Nation communities, an additional \$30 million in projects extending broadband coverage to over 96% of northern Ontario homes, and we're going to get all the way there. We've launched a new Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, providing an-

nually now, and permanently, \$100 million per year to small, rural and northern municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that these are priorities for us. We never heard a thing from the opposition party during the campaign last year at all about its northern plan. We're very proud of our northern plan, and it's a total priority of Premier Wynne and our government.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, your revolving door of excuses is getting old and tired. Your newest excuse is trying to pull the wool over taxpayers' eyes by telling us the MaRS loan is fully secure.

Minister, CBRE's most recent appraisal pegs the value of the building at \$303 million if 100% leased. You've blown \$224 million on the loan, \$65 million more on ARE, and now we're on the hook for \$106.5 million in interest. That's a lot more than \$300 million, Minister. You're like the Energizer minister: You just keep digging and digging and digging us into a deeper hole.

Minister, are you planning on cutting our losses and selling the building, or will you just keep pouring millions more into a bad deal you never should have signed off on in the first place?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What's getting old and tired is the member's daily attacks on the integrity of MaRS and the opportunities that MaRS brings to our bioscience cluster. If the member was really concerned about the economy and jobs, he'd be supporting our bioscience cluster and the efforts that MaRS makes to grow jobs and attract investment.

But there's a big difference between that party and this party. Yes, Mr. Speaker, when the MaRS phase 2 project was having challenges, we did step up and provide support to ensure that that building did not rot in the ground. His party would have let that building rot in the ground. He would have kissed away the jobs that are going to come from the work that MaRS does and the economic development and investment that that will attract to this province.

I will not be taking his advice. I'm looking forward to the advice of Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, who will help us ensure that this project becomes a success.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, we know that you don't understand the business case, and no one is surprised now that you don't understand an appraisal either.

Your appraisal just doesn't add up. Both CBRE and Altus based their valuations of MaRS on it being fully leased to tenants paying for research and life science spaces, yet we know there is no market for the 780,000 square feet of research space. But we do know you're planning to put bureaucrats in there, and the market value for office space is \$8 to \$10 less per square foot than for research space. That means the value of the building is tens of millions of dollars less, even when it is fully rented.

Can you tell this House exactly how many millions more MaRS 2 is worth when filled with bureaucrats instead of scientists? Or are you just going to pass this off to the finance minister as more leakage next year?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The PC Party's approach to dealing with the challenges faced by MaRS phase 2 was to let that building rot in the ground. That was their approach, but it shouldn't surprise us. It shouldn't surprise us, because when things get tough, Tories run and hide. Look at what they did with the auto sector when the auto sector was having challenges. We stepped up, partnered with the auto sector, and ensured that 400,000-plus direct and indirect jobs were saved in this province. The approach of that party was to let those plants close.

When it comes down to it, this party has the intestinal fortitude to make the investments we need to make to grow our economy, to partner with the private sector when necessary, to make the important business decisions going forward that are responsible to taxpayers, that are going to create jobs and grow our economy. That party clearly does not.

1120

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Education. On July 9, the Premier stood in this House and said, "We're not going to cut education." Yesterday, the economic update poured cold water on that Liberal promise. The Liberals have quietly admitted that they're actually planning half a billion dollars in cuts to schools in this province. The 2015 education funding guide shows up to \$500 million in cuts by 2017.

Why did the Premier promise Ontarians no cuts to education while asking you, Minister, to slash \$500 million in crucial funding to our schools?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think one of the things that you need to recognize is that, in fact, we have increased spending in education more than any other government has ever done. In fact, on average, per-pupil spending has increased anywhere from 50% to 60%, depending on where the board is in Ontario. So I absolutely challenge anyone who says that we are not funding education properly.

It is true that we have declining enrolment, and that when you find that enrolment is declining, there may be individual boards who, because they've had dramatic declines in enrolment, may not have had as much funding this year as last. But the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier said one thing and now she's doing the opposite. Her budget promised increased funding to school boards to keep up with growing enrolment. She's on the record promising no cuts to schools, and yet the Ministry of Education is spelling out \$500 million in cuts to our classrooms and says annual increases are things of the past.

These cuts will hurt an education system that's already hurting from being underfunded. It could mean balloon-

ing class sizes, teacher layoffs and even more school closures.

Will the minister tell Ontarians exactly what this cut of half a billion dollars will mean to the students, teachers and education workers of this province?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let me repeat: The funding is now at \$22.5 billion through the Grants for Student Needs. That represents an increase of 56.5% or over \$4,000 per pupil since 2003. The funding has gone up. In fact, in the area that he's talking about, this year, which is looking at some of the operating issues, we've actually added \$8.3 million to help boards with planning. We've added \$15.5 million to help them invest in teaching staff in remote areas of the province where we know that the schools are going to remain open. We're actually increasing the funding so that those schools can remain open. The bottom line here is, yes, the funding keeps going up, the per-pupil funding.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation and Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, Ontario has some of the best-educated, hardest-working and most creative young people in the world. Many of them live in my riding of Burlington, where I've had the privilege of meeting post-secondary students who are eager to transform their bright ideas into successful businesses. However, what I'm finding out is that many of them are not aware of the programs, tools and services that the government makes available to them to develop their entrepreneurial skills and launch their own companies.

Minister, I understand that the response to Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy has been very strong. Our government is well on its way to achieving its target of connecting 30,000 young people with job opportunities.

Minister, can you please tell the members of this House what steps our government is taking to support young entrepreneurs and help them thrive in today's market economy?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Burlington for that very good question. This week is Global Entrepreneurship Week, so the question is great.

Building a culture of innovation, research excellence and entrepreneurship is at the heart of our government's jobs and economic strategy. We recognize that the economy needs a culture of start-ups and workers who drive creativity and competitiveness in the new world economy. That's why entrepreneurship programs form a key part of our government's youth jobs strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Youth Entrepreneurship Fund provides young people with mentorship and seed capital to start their own businesses.

The Ontario Youth Innovation Fund helps young innovators get the advanced work experience and start-up support they need to translate their research into the 21st-century economy.

Helping young people get the experience and resources they need to launch their own companies is part

of our government's plan to develop an innovative business climate in this province.

We will continue to build Ontario up by investing in a suite of programs and services that will help young people turn their ideas and dreams into reality.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It is great to hear that our government is taking the necessary steps to help our young people become successful entrepreneurs.

Minister, post-secondary education plays a crucial role in preparing the next generation of Ontario's entrepreneurs. It is imperative that our government invest in student entrepreneurship at the post-secondary level in order to provide our future leaders with the tools they need to succeed in tomorrow's economy. Investing in a dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial post-secondary system will nurture our business visionaries, ignite their entrepreneurial spirit and help them grow Ontario's economy.

Can the minister tell us more about the different on-campus programs being offered to young entrepreneurs and how our government is building a dynamic entrepreneurial post-secondary system in our province?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member again for that question.

Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of investing in student entrepreneurship in the 21st-century global economy.

That's why our government is building the most entrepreneurial post-secondary system in North America by investing \$25 million in two dynamic on-campus programs. The first one is the campus-linked accelerators, which is providing funding to institutions to integrate on-campus entrepreneurial activities with local businesses and industry. The second program is the On-Campus Entrepreneurship Activities Program, which is helping to kick-start business activities within institutions.

I'm proud to report that of the 44 Ontario post-secondary institutions, 42 of them now have on-campus entrepreneurship programs.

These programs are giving students the chance to develop their business ideas while at the same time transforming our post-secondary institutions into entrepreneurship hubs.

Mr. Speaker, we are producing some of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week I received an email from a local news organization indicating that your government plans to approve, by the end of November, wpd's application to build eight 500-foot-tall wind turbines, structures that will be as tall as the TD tower here in Toronto, directly beside the Collingwood Regional Airport.

I've raised this issue, as you know, many times with your government over the years. You yourself visited the area just before you became leader. You said that this

specific project should not go ahead in the face of community opposition, and you also said that an airport should not have to shut down because of wind turbines.

So, Premier, is it true? Are you going to approve these 500-foot wind turbines in proximity to Collingwood airport?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, there's an environmental assessment process for these things as well, in which the public has a chance to comment.

Airports and airport standards are regulated by the federal government. We've had this debate with members opposite. We have a federal transportation minister who doesn't like to return provincial ministers' calls, and that's always a challenge. We're really looking for some leadership from the federal government here, because you cannot build things in the pathway of an airport contrary to federal government fly-in approach and rules.

I've offered many times to meet with the member opposite; I've offered to sit down. I've actually met with people from the airport. We need greater clarity from them.

We're following our rules. We'll follow our EA process, and we're looking—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

1130

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, all four surrounding municipalities are against this project.

They would like their planning power back so that at least they would have the common sense and wisdom to not put these damn things next to an airport.

It's insane what you're doing. It's insane that you say one thing in the area just before you're elected leader and then not do the review that you said you would do—or at least I'm not aware that you've done it—and that this process just keeps plowing ahead. It doesn't make any sense.

Minister, I say to you, the federal government has no rules about wind turbines near airports because they didn't need to develop rules because the municipalities used to have the planning tools to make sure this wouldn't happen. They're looking at you like a bunch of dummies that you would actually do this in the first place. They're saying, "Give back the planning power."

So why don't you do that? Why don't you give these municipalities and all the municipalities across rural Ontario the authority they deserve? They can tell you where to put your garage or where to place your house, but a 500-foot wind turbine, they have no say in. Shame on you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock, please. Order, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't know quite what to say after that other than that the member should really be the member representing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will come to order—second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: After that dramatic performance, the member should be representing the community of Stratford. That's an Academy Award-winning performance.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce will come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I know the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce will come to order—second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I knew what direction that was, I would warn that member. It's not a laughing matter.

Please finish.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're not interested in endangering the lives of Ontarians, and we also respect the constitutional authority—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont, come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm the member for Toronto Centre. I fly out of the island airport. There are very tall structures all around that, and we—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Be seated, please.

The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much, Speaker. There are large smoke stacks about—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A little more fibre, a little less coffee, maybe, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish your answer.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

No price was too high to bail out the government's MaRS project even though high-tech companies showed little interest in occupying the space, but a company is interested in taking over the Fort Frances mill. There is a deal to be struck that would create and save 1,000 jobs in the Rainy River district. The people of Fort Frances don't need \$300 million; we just need \$5 million to save the mill from being destroyed this winter so that we can finalize a plan to keep the mill open and save 1,000 jobs. The clock is ticking.

Will this government pay to heat the mill this winter?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. I've responded to this question in the House before. When I responded to it last time, I advised the member and the House that we were investigating what possibilities there might be around this should the eventuality arise which has arisen; that being that the business-to-business relationship that was trying to be struck between the owner of the mill, Resolute Forest Products, and the potential purchaser of the mill, Expera, fell apart. The deal did fall apart, but I'm saying here, as I said back then, that even before that had occurred, even before the member was on her feet asking this particular question, we had already begun to see what was possible in that regard should we be needed to step in to see what we can do.

I said that a couple of weeks ago, and I'll say it here again today. I have nothing to announce today. We're investigating the possibility to see what we might be able to do, and hopefully we will have a response on that in the not-too-distant future.

We've been in contact with the owner of the mill. There is still an opportunity. We understand time is short to make a final decision in that regard. We're on it; we're looking into what's possible. It is still a privately owned mill—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This government has bent over backwards to bail out the MaRS project, spending over \$300 million—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you.

Stop the clock.

The House will stand recessed for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This government bent over backwards to bail out its MaRS project, spending over \$300 million for a two-thirds-empty building. But when the people of the Rainy River district asked the government to help save 1,000 jobs that depend on the Fort Frances mill, we get only excuses.

As you can tell by the ice on the ground, winter is here. If the Fort Frances mill is not heated, it will be damaged and lost forever.

Minister, it's simple: The government could find \$300 million for MaRS. Will the government find \$5 million to save 1,000 jobs and heat the mill this winter?

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Minister of Natural Resources: This is a question about priorities.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. As I've mentioned on several occasions, we were investigating this possibility long before the NDP were on their feet, talking about or asking this particular question—a long time ago.

I also think, Speaker, that it is a bit disingenuous for the member to get on her feet and suggest, with apparently some certainty, that there is a deal to be done here. There is no guarantee that a deal can be done here.

It is just as disingenuous to say that as it is to suggest to the people—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You have to withdraw.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Withdraw.

I think it is, Speaker, unfortunate language to somehow be conveying to the people of Fort Frances that there is some guarantee of a deal to be done, as it is unfortunate to convey to the people of Fort Frances that, with a stroke of a pen, somehow we could have fixed this particular deal.

The tenure system that is in place today is one that was created by the NDP in 1994. It's a system that we moved forward with, legislatively, in 2011 to change. Even if the new change was in place, it would not have guaranteed a deal in any particular way, Speaker.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Ma question est pour le ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement. Minister, as you're well aware, on October 27, people across my riding of Ottawa—Orléans, and Ontario, came together to elect our municipal leaders and school board trustees. All told, approximately 28 council members and 700 trustees were elected from the thousands of candidates who put their names on a ballot. While local elections have now drawn to a close, the work ahead for both our government and our municipal partners is really just beginning.

Throughout the province, including my riding of Ottawa—Orléans, where four councillors are being sworn in, including one newly elected member—on December 1, the province is readying for new municipal governments.

At the provincial level, Minister, you and your staff are beginning a review of the Municipal Elections Act, as is typical after every municipal election cycle. Minister, can you tell us at this point about where you stand on municipal electoral reform, please?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks for that great question. I don't mind telling you where I stand on municipal reform. I stand with any change that makes sense and has a lot of support from our municipal leaders and our stakeholders, as well as the people of Ontario. That's why we will be consulting broadly with AMO, the Ontario elections people and other stakeholders.

But before I say anything more, I just want to take a moment to congratulate the 2,800 or so folk who stood for election as mayor or councillor and the 700 who

stood for school board trustee. It takes a lot of courage to put your name on a ballot and to go out in the public and talk about your hopes and dreams, and to listen to the hopes and dreams of others and respond. So congratulations to those folk. I know I can speak for the Premier when I say we're going to be looking forward to working closely with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: For constituents of my riding of Ottawa—Orléans and communities across the province, municipal electoral reform is a hot-button issue. After all, municipal elections are the fundamental way that Ontarians can engage with government and make their voices heard on the issues that affect their lives on a daily basis.

During Ottawa's local elections, I have been offered no shortage in suggested changes to the ways our municipal elections are conducted. I know the minister will share my sentiment and enthusiasm surrounding local government, and how we can choose to elect local officials is something that we at the provincial level must encourage.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister share some details about how the review of the Municipal Elections Act will welcome input? In addition, what do you hope the review will achieve?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I hope the review will achieve great things. I know I speak for the Premier when I say we look forward to working with the new municipal leaders. It's a core principle of our government that after every election we review the Municipal Elections Act. I would welcome the honourable member, who said she has heard many ideas from her constituents, to share those with me, and anyone else who has ideas as well. We intend to invite the public to submit their thoughts, and we're getting some of that. We will organize post-election meetings with AMO and other stakeholders, because we think it's important to hear directly from them.

As you may know, the Premier has directed in my mandate letter that we'll be providing municipalities with the option to introduce ranked balloting, and we intend to go forward with that.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, yesterday I had asked you about David MacPherson, a Londoner tragically killed in a fire that engulfed the unlicensed group home he was forced to live in.

Days before this fatal fire took place, a manager from your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee toured the building. Despite all the health and safety violations charged against this home, you claimed in this very House yesterday that the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee does not make personal decisions for their clients, recommend or refer clients to this type of housing. Instead, this office is satisfied with allotting the funds needed to sustain people in substandard housing and passing the buck on to the next ministry.

Minister, will you admit that because of your government's inability to provide quality services to our most desperate citizens, this tragedy occurred?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I offer my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the gentleman who perished after being in this building, after the fire. It's very important that all the agencies that deal with these individuals work together to make sure that this does not happen again.

As I said yesterday, the agency that the member is speaking about is only responsible for administering the monetary administration, but I know that the city of London is going to look into it and work with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to make sure that this does not happen again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, you're talking more about passing the buck down to the municipality of London. Maybe you should take a stand and stand up for the people of Ontario.

The police department has visited this facility over 100 times in 2014. Red flags were everywhere—health, safety, fire and zoning violations—but still, some of our most vulnerable citizens in London were living in those conditions. This tragedy could have been prevented if your government acted on the 2011 mental health strategy to ensure safe, stable housing. Instead, some part of the strategy remains a standing item at the deputy minister's social policy committee.

Your ministry needs to take action and demand answers about this tragedy. You owe it to the people of London. Minister, will you confirm today that your ministry will call a coroner's inquest into the death of Londoner Dave MacPherson?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The minister of public safety and corrections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Of course, our condolences go to the victim's family for this tragedy. Of course, we all have to resolve that we prevent these types of tragedies from taking place.

The member raised the question around asking the coroner to do an inquest.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: If you read this report, it might help.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the member opposite knows quite well that a coroner is an independent officer who makes a determination on the facts of the case on his own, whether to hold an inquest or not. There is no capability on the part of the government or me, as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, to ask the coroner to do an inquest, so I leave it up to the coroner to make that determination.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale-High Park on a point of order.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: According to standing order 99(d), ministries have 24 sessional days to answer written questions. I want to draw your attention to page 14 on the order paper, where I've asked three questions of the Minister of Transportation and I have received absolutely no answers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. I will remind the minister that, indeed, the time frame in which they are to respond is on. I believe it's overdue, so we'll make sure that that happens.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Ontario Environment Industry Association. They represent some of Ontario's most innovative environment and clean tech companies. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Waterloo on a point of order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to correct my record. Yesterday, in responding to the fall economic statement I quoted that 53% of children in Toronto live in poverty. I was quoting the Poverty-Free Toronto report. In fact, the number is: 63% of children in some Toronto neighbourhoods live in poverty.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. All members are eligible to correct their own record.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome a former colleague from the House of Commons, my friend Jennifer Sloan, to the Legislature. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on a motion for allocation of time on Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 17, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 8. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Potts, Arthur
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Souza, Charles
Takhhar, Harinder S.
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
DiNovo, Cheri
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 45.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry concerning the Fort Frances mill. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale–High Park, asked on a point of order today: The answers to your questions on the order paper have been tabled this morning.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to introduce a number of people here in the west gallery this afternoon, if I could. They're here for the Ontario Environment Industry Association day. They include Paul Murray, who is the senior vice-president at AECOM; Derek Webb, the vice-president of Guelph-based Biorem and chair of the ONEIA board; David Henderson, the managing director of XPV Capital and chair of the Environment Industry Day; Ellen Greenwood, the founder of Greenwood and Associates and chair of the EID organizing committee; and Alex Gill, executive director of the Ontario Environment Industry Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good afternoon, Speaker. I would like to introduce the people that I was supposed to introduce, but it doesn't look like they're here: Jackie Manthorne, president and CEO of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, and Tiffany Glover, government relations and engagement manager for the CCSN.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We normally just pretend that they are here.

Further introductions?

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery C.J. Augustine-Kanu, the Honorary Consul General of Grenada at Toronto. Welcome, and congratulations on your new posting. All the best.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We should be able to visit and reciprocate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll do an all-party visit.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

Mr. Michael Harris: I stand to recognize the township of Wilmot in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga today on the significant achievement of eradicating all debt from their books. That's right: Yesterday was "debt-free day" for Wilmot following a final \$30,000 payment for roadwork on New Hamburg's Hamilton Road and Arnold Street.

How did they do it, Speaker? Mayor Les Armstrong told the Waterloo Record, "We just managed to be able to keep ourselves controlled over the last four years knowing that this day was coming—we managed to keep ourselves under control and not go into a bunch of debt."

"Under control," Speaker. I pause to just make sure my colleagues on the opposite side heard that.

While they stayed controlled, the township managed to build the \$10-million Wilmot Recreation Complex, begin work on the New Dundee splash pad and renovations at New Hamburg Arena, and, of course, the New Dundee library, as well as work on road and bridge improvements. It can be done. You can have fiscal control and forward-moving progress at the same time.

Now, rather than throwing tax dollars at debt interest payments of, at one time, roughly \$160,000 annually, they can go towards building an even brighter future in Wilmot. So I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Wilmot council: Mayor Armstrong, Councillors Peter Roe, Al Junker, Barry Fisher, Jeff Gerber and Mark Murray—and CAO Grant Whittington and his staff on this significant achievement.

BEV McCLOSKEY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This weekend, we lost a gleaming light in my riding of Oshawa, and a bold trailblazer for women's and workers' rights across this province.

Bev McCloskey was an active member of Local 222 in Oshawa for 65 years. She started at GM in 1949 and served on the executive board for 17 years.

She was a founding member of Local 222's first women's committee in 1968, and in 1969, the members of that committee successfully fought to end segregated seniority lists and male-only jobs at General Motors. The women's committee was also instrumental in changing the Ontario Human Rights Code to include gender as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

Bev would not back down for anyone. She fought battles on the shop floor to get Sunshine Girls and pin-ups taken down. When they wouldn't, she would slap a sticker on the picture stating, "This offends women." She also gave out famous yellow cards to men who spoke offensively to women.

Her activism spanned the community of Durham region, including the Unemployed Help Centre and Sunrise Seniors Place.

Bev received the Agnes Macphail Award from the Ontario NDP women's committee in 2012. She was named the CAW's Outstanding Retired Worker of the Year and named to the OFL's Labour Honour Roll in 2013.

Bev leaves behind her husband, Pat, and generations of women across our province who will be forever in her debt. For that, I am honoured to have the opportunity today to recognize her immeasurable impact. Thank you, Bev McCloskey.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Today, members of the Ontario Environment Industry Association, or ONEIA, are here, holding their annual Environment Industry Day at Queen's Park. This event, which is supported by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, showcases the important work and incredible growth of Ontario's environmental industry.

Ontario's environmental sector has 3,000 firms, employs 65,000 people, and is worth an estimated \$8 billion in annual revenues and \$1 billion in export earnings. This is an incredible achievement, and one we should all be proud of.

Our province is now home to 35% of Canada's innovative clean-tech companies.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that a number of forward-thinking environment companies have their offices in my riding of Halton. Renewable Energy Management, or REM, is a Burlington-based company that is on its way to becoming a leading provider of sustainable water management solutions while contributing energy to surrounding communities.

Similarly, Newalta is a massive multinational company with 85 offices across the United States and Canada. It helps customers reduce disposal, enhance recycling and recover valuable resources from industrial residues.

Together, we will build a clean, sustainable and prosperous future for all Ontarians.

BRIDGE DEDICATIONS

Mr. Steve Clark: This year I was proud to attend two bridge dedication ceremonies in Gananogue to honour a pair of true hometown heroes. The tragic deaths of Corporal Randy Payne and Constable Henry Harper in the service of others was the reason we gathered in tribute. But the ceremonies were also a celebration of two remarkable lives and a strong message to the families of both men that they will never be forgotten.

First, I want to publicly commend the Ministry of Transportation for its bridge dedication program and for working with the Canadian Forces to extend the honour to Corporal Payne, a military police officer.

I also want to thank my friend Jerry Carmichael for his invaluable role in championing Constable Harper's tribute.

These public memorials are a reminder to millions of motorists on provincial highways of the risks the brave men and women of our police services take every day to keep us safe.

Constable Harper, a 28-year-old father of four, died after being struck while investigating a traffic incident in August 1957. Corporal Payne, a 32-year-old father of two, died on patrol in Afghanistan in April 2006, when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

The deaths of these young husbands and fathers hit their small town very hard and sadly stole a lifetime of new memories from their children.

To motorists passing these dedicated bridges in Gananogue, or any other Ontario community, I ask you to reflect on the sacrifices of the officers whose names you read. Then, honour their memory by asking what more you can do to serve your community.

NDP CONVENTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure to speak today about the Ontario NDP's 26th biennial convention this past weekend. With over 1,100 delegates, the convention

was the most well-attended in the party's history. It was a rejuvenating convention, and there was a great deal of the kind of vigorous policy discussion that New Democrats are known for.

During her speech to the convention, our leader, Andrea Horwath, spoke to the delegates of the importance of confronting climate change immediately. She said, "Climate change is real and a threat to the future of the human species on this planet"—an important reminder of the work that we all need to be doing.

1510

One theme of the convention was something the Ontario NDP have been talking about for years, and that's the importance of ensuring our shared prosperity. Taking seriously the challenge of climate change and the protection of our environment is a pivotal aspect of our shared prosperity, and there is also convincing evidence that the degradation of our environment will have an even greater impact on our most vulnerable citizens.

Just days before the convention, I had the opportunity to speak at the Creating Action event in Waterloo, hosted by ClimateAction Waterloo region. I spoke of the grave state of the environmental policy in this province but also of the opportunities for the future.

There is so much more that we should be doing and can be doing. We should be pursuing environmental assessments on Line 9. We should be addressing transit infrastructure and not building diesel trains. We should be addressing the fact that the OMB can override progressive planning in this province.

Clearly, local communities are leading on this front, and we need to catch up.

CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: It is a pleasure to rise today in the House to welcome and congratulate the CCSN, the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. I had the honour of sponsoring the group for their legislative breakfast this morning. Thank you to all who took time to drop in and to hear all the good things that go on through the CCSN.

As a cancer survivor myself, I would have appreciated having access to this wonderful resource when I was going through cancer. CCSN works to connect patients, survivors and other stakeholder groups with decision-makers and the wider community to engage in discussion and to act on evidence-based best practices to alleviate the medical, emotional, financial and social costs of cancer and encourage research on ways to overcome barriers to optimal cancer care and follow-up for survivors in Canada.

Among other things, they educate the public and policy-makers about the financial, emotional and health costs of cancer and offer positive ideas and recommendations to help them.

Please join me in congratulating the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for all the great work that they do. Congratulations, CCSN, and thank you for educating us.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: On Monday, the appeal of the Sumac Ridge wind turbine project finally got under way, giving the impacted residents of my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock the chance to have their concerns heard when it comes to five 500-foot-tall wind turbines being built in their own backyard.

Over the course of the next several weeks, the tribunal will hear from dozens of concerned citizens, including: Manvers Wind Concerns; the city of Kawartha Lakes; First Nations groups, including Curve Lake and Hiawatha; and the Cham Shan Buddhist temple, which will be the only temple of its kind outside of China when finished.

Unfortunately, the city of Peterborough was denied participation in the tribunal, even though these turbines will impact safety at the Peterborough airport.

In 2001, under a Progressive Conservative government, the Oak Ridges moraine received special protection from the province of Ontario. This present government even created the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to further protect the Oak Ridges moraine.

The Oak Ridges moraine is the rain barrel of southern Ontario. But now the moraine is at risk if these wind turbines are allowed to go ahead on protected lands. This project will require new roads to be built on the moraine, thousands of trees to be cut down and removed, and alterations to the elevations in the hilly landscape. This will begin the industrialization of this pristine area.

I hope that the tribunal and the Ministry of the Environment will hear these concerns and agree to reverse the approval of the Sumac Ridge wind turbine project.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements. The member from Newmarket-Aurora.

CONSERVATION AWARDS

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and speak about how the people of Newmarket-Aurora are committed to protecting our natural environment.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is a leader in ensuring the environmental health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. That's why I'm excited about the authority's annual conservation awards, which were handed out in a ceremony earlier in November in Newmarket.

These awards recognized 22 individuals, schools, businesses and groups that all exemplify the desire to preserve Ontario's natural environment.

Two groups in Newmarket and Aurora took home an award that night. I couldn't be more proud. First, Lester B. Pearson Public School was recognized for the creation of their eco team, made up of young environmental leaders in grades 2 to 8. As an example, the eco team organized the week-long litterless lunches program. Selling solid, fillable water bottles, students were able to

raise enough money to buy a water bottle refilling station and reduce the use of plastic bottles. The future looks bright indeed with tomorrow's leaders like these.

Mr. Speaker, also recognized was the York Region Geocachers Club. This group embodies a love of adventure and, most importantly, the outdoors. The club organized two successful cleanup events across the region and encourages all Ontarians to contribute to keeping our beautiful province clean.

Mr. Speaker, again, it's an honour to stand here today and thank both of these winners for their tireless work and their responsible vision.

GasTOPS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Today I rise to talk about an innovative and exciting business presented to me last week. GasTOPS, which stands for Gas Turbines and Other Propulsion Systems, provides support to the energy, marine and aerospace industries by creating equipment which detects bearing and gear damage at its earlier stage. This allows operators to reduce lost revenue and repair costs.

One of the cornerstone products of GasTOPS is the MetalSCAN, which is installed on more than 2,000 operational gas turbines worldwide. The MetalSCAN is an online debris monitor that creates a clear picture of the health of each gearbox to avoid expensive surprises.

GasTOPS employs 130 professionals and plans to continue expanding. This creates much-needed high-quality jobs in Ontario, and will continue to do so, as they are committed to remaining in the east end of Ottawa.

GasTOPS works closely with Carleton University's aerospace engineering program and brings in around five students every year for co-ops.

I would like to thank David Muir, the president and chief executive officer of GasTOPS, as well as Ross MacDonald, vice-president of corporate development, who have taken the time to meet with me. A special thank you goes to Sylvie Tremblay, manufacturing engineer, for showing me around.

Ce fut un privilège d'observer le processus de la création de leurs produits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup. I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 18, 2014, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Mr. Crack from the Standing Committee on General Government presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / *Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WALKER TOWNE CENTRE INC. ACT, 2014

Mr. Hatfield moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr13, An Act to revive Walker Towne Centre Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / *Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will be very short, Speaker. This bill is a bill that I have introduced five times. It has been introduced by the Liberal government, and I think we're on the same page on that one. Basically, it makes the sale of flavoured tobacco products prohibited. It's as simple as that. That includes all flavours, including menthol. The sale of promotional items together with tobacco products is prohibited, and there are a few adjustments made to the penalty provisions that already exist in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

I sure hope that this bill goes through—the lucky fifth time.

PLANNING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Milczyn moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Planning Act and certain regulations / *Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et certains règlements.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm proud to rise for the first time with my first private member's bill.

This bill addresses three broad areas of land use and planning reform:

—more local decision-making by constraining the number of types of OMB appeals that could be filed and restricting the types of appeals of committee of adjustment decisions, permitting local appeal boards to move forward.

—It also will modernize the planning process by allowing for electronic notice, extending timelines before appeals can be filed, and defining what minor variances actually are.

—The third area of reform would be giving municipalities more control to manage the impacts of growth by better means of instituting section 37—which is providing community benefits from development—by implementing inclusionary zoning, which will provide for more affordable housing, and by instituting excellence in design for buildings in public places.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion

without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to six days between January 19 and 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Duguid moves that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to six days between January 19 and 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Hon. Brad Duguid: I rise today to recognize Global Entrepreneurship Week. I ask all sides of this House to join me in celebrating our entrepreneurs, who contribute so much to our economy and our quality of life.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is truly a worldwide event. An estimated 7.5 million people participate in approximately 140 countries. It's an international movement to inspire innovation, imagination and creativity through entrepreneurship.

Futurpreneur Canada, formerly the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, is the Canadian host of Global Entrepreneurship Week. For nearly two decades, this organization has worked to fuel the passions of young Canadians who want to start a business. They are critical partners in our government's efforts to create a culture of entrepreneurialism in our province. I was proud to extend funding support to Futurpreneur Canada in my previous days in this post, and I look forward to working with them to advance the work they are doing in the days ahead.

Just last week I was at my former high school, Woburn Collegiate, to launch the Make Your Pitch competition. I met a number of current and future young entrepreneurs there, and I must say that I reached the conclusion that the IQ level at Woburn has certainly gone up since my days there; I don't know if it has anything to do with me. These students were downright inspiring.

The Make Your Pitch program challenges high school students in any grade to sell their business idea in a two-minute video. The public and expert judges vote on the video pitches. The top six business ideas automatically qualify for Ontario's Summer Company program. Summer Company includes mentoring, training and up to \$3,000 to launch a business.

I've made a point, through the years, of spending a lot of time with young entrepreneurs. One of the things

they've said repeatedly is that the mentoring they have received through Summer Company or other programs has been invaluable to their success. Connecting successful business experts and serial entrepreneurs with aspiring entrepreneurs breeds success. I've also come across countless examples of entrepreneurs who got their start with Ontario's Summer Company program, so the opportunity to gain entry to this program can be very valuable for a young entrepreneur.

Building a culture of entrepreneurialism in our society in Ontario not only provides opportunities for success for our young people; it is also critical for our economy. The fact is that small entrepreneurial businesses make up 99.7% of businesses in Ontario. They employ almost five million Ontarians. Small businesses truly are the backbone of our economy.

Our government is working hard to build a province that welcomes and nurtures small businesses. We have fast become one of the best places in North America to launch and grow a small business. We have a competitive tax climate, a highly skilled workforce, a modern and efficient infrastructure, and a strong culture for innovation. Those competitive advantages have contributed to our success in being the number one destination for foreign direct capital investment in North America.

These competitive advantages have also contributed to building a successful climate for small business start-ups. We're committed to supporting entrepreneurs in Ontario, which is why we're so supportive of the work being done by our Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs, also known as ONE. It's a one-stop shop to help people who are thinking about starting a business. It, along with the leadership of the Ontario Centres of Excellence, provides support to our growing legion of start-up incubators rising up across Ontario; some on university and college campuses, and others right in our communities.

Our universities and colleges have embraced the need to include entrepreneurial thinking and programs in their offerings to Ontario students. Many students are taking advantage of those programs, and many are graduating from college or university not just with a diploma or a degree, but with their own business.

Ontario's start-up incubators have become known as among the best in the world. From the Digital Media Zone at Ryerson, to Communitech in Waterloo, to the work being done at MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, to name just a few, Ontario is attracting attention from across North America. It's not by accident that great, innovative companies like Google, IBM, Cisco and Ubisoft, among others, are making significant investments in Ontario. They want to be where the young entrepreneurial talent is, and that's right here in the province of Ontario.

I want to talk more about the young entrepreneurs and young Ontarians who are really the key to our next-generation economy. Helping them get the right education, skills and mentoring that they need to succeed in tomorrow's global economy is absolutely critical for our economic plan.

1530

A year ago, Premier Wynne launched Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy. The strategy is an investment in the talents of this province's young people. Summer Company and Make Your Pitch are just two of the strategy's programs that help young people connect with the support they need to start their own business. The youth jobs strategy began with a goal of providing 30,000 young people with work experience. It has been a huge success already. I am pleased to report we've already created more than 23,000 job opportunities across this province for Ontario youth. Who knows how many companies our young entrepreneurs will start up?

Building a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovative thinking is a crucial part of our economic plan. Ontario is now producing some of the best entrepreneurs in North America. This is one of the reasons why Ontario will fulfill our destiny to be a global economic powerhouse in the next-generation economy.

Please join me in celebrating Global Entrepreneurship Week in the province of Ontario.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: November is Adoption Awareness Month. I don't know if everyone in the House is aware of that. I want to highlight that our government, along with partners in the child welfare sector, is working very hard to increase the number of crown wards living in permanent homes.

Mr. Speaker, we know that children and youth who grow up in permanent homes—we call them the “forever” homes—are more likely to be healthy, graduate from high school, hold a job, and contribute to their communities.

We also know that children's aid societies, also known as CASS, often face more challenges when placing the older crown wards and siblings into a permanent home. That's why our government introduced financial subsidies to eligible parents who adopt or take legal custody of crown wards 10 years of age and over.

The Ontario government also provides subsidies when crown ward siblings of any age are adopted, as we know the challenges that can exist when siblings are separated.

Adopting an older child or sibling group is a significant responsibility and one that comes, of course, with added costs. These subsidies go a long way to supporting families to care for these young people, allowing them to meet the child's needs without creating undue financial hardship.

In addition to these financial supports, our government is very proud of other accomplishments we've made in the adoption area. Among them is the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011. This removed legal barriers so that more kids in the care of CASS can be adopted. In the past year there have been almost 1,000 public and private adoptions in Ontario—1,000 adoptions.

We continue to fund the Adoption Council of Ontario to manage the AdoptOntario program. There is a website

there that helps match children available for adoption with prospective adoptive parents wanting to build their families.

And, with the help of the child welfare sector, we have more than doubled the number of Adoption Resource Exchanges held every year. This is a forum that helps match potential adoptive families with children needing adoption. I was very happy to give opening remarks this past weekend at the most recent Adoption Resource Exchange, which took place on the 15th, I believe. I was able to share my own story of pursuing an international adoption that my husband and I went on. Although it did not conclude with us adopting children, I certainly can empathize fully with the process and the due diligence one must go through to become an adoptive parent. It was really great to be at that conference and to meet parents and couples and others who are wanting to adopt children.

We're also committed to improving outcomes for aboriginal children and youth. We know that it's very critical for aboriginal children and youth to remain connected to their families, their cultures and their traditions. That's why in April 2013 this government released a formal customary care practice guide to help support culturally appropriate placements for First Nations children and youth receiving child welfare services. Training sessions on the guide were delivered to CASs and to the First Nations stakeholders across the province to support the use of the formal customary care guidelines.

Speaker, our government is committed to improving the lives of all children in Ontario, including the children who live in care. While I'm very proud of the progress we have made to support children and youth in finding permanent homes, I know and we all know that there is much more work to do. With the ongoing support of our partners in the child welfare sector, we can, and we will, do even more to bring families together and help children and youth in care reach their full potential.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

It's now time for responses.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm honoured to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to help recognize Global Entrepreneurship Week.

When Global Entrepreneurship Week was first launched in 2007, it was recognized in 18 countries. This week, from November 17 to 23, 150 countries around the world will be participating in this annual celebration. The goal of Global Entrepreneurship Week is to inspire people around the world through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators.

Around the world, Global Entrepreneurship Week connects more than 7.5 million people in those 150 countries with potential collaborators, mentors and investors. According to Futurpreneur Canada, the host of this year's

celebrations in Canada, there will be 475 events taking place across the country to mark this occasion. These events introduce aspiring entrepreneurs to new opportunities and new connections, which will help them as they embark on the journey of starting their own businesses.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is the world's largest celebration of innovators and job creators. It recognizes the people who launch start-up companies and the individuals who do the hard work to build companies from the ground up.

Entrepreneurs are people who have the dedication, the commitment, the perseverance, the persistence and the vision to take their dream and turn it into a reality. They are individuals who take pride in seeing their businesses grow from the ground up. They're willing to take risks, to put in the work and drive economic growth and create jobs for millions of Canadians. Entrepreneurs and the small businesses that they start are the backbone of our economy.

The minister, in his remarks, mentioned young entrepreneurs. I'm proud to say that my grandfather Leonard Arnott was a young entrepreneur, starting in the construction business in 1929 when he had just turned 21 and was old enough to sign a contract on his own. The company that he founded, Arnott Construction Ltd., continues to this day, 85 years later, serving private and public clients primarily in the Simcoe county area.

According to Stats Canada, in December 2012, there were more than 1.1 million small businesses in Canada, 381,000 of them here in Ontario, accounting for 98.2% of Canadian companies. In 2012, over 88% of Ontarians worked for a small or medium-sized business.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire PC caucus, many of whom are entrepreneurs and have been entrepreneurs before their election to this House, I want to thank entrepreneurs for the hard work that they do.

We encourage everyone to learn more about Global Entrepreneurship Week and to see what we can do, working together to support Ontario's entrepreneurs.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It really is an honour to rise today to talk about Adoption Awareness Month. This is an issue that I've raised a couple of times since I've been elected here at Queen's Park, and one issue that I'm quite passionate about.

I want to acknowledge all adoptive families, who have opened up their hearts to children in need of loving homes.

Raising awareness about adoption is incredibly important here in Ontario, where we have almost 7,000 children and youth without permanent homes. Every child needs a family to love and support them, but ensuring these children find stable, supportive homes is a real challenge. It's a challenge for us, as MPPs, to find effective legislation. It's a challenge for families struggling with custody issues. It's a challenge for the hundreds of dedicated people working in our child welfare system. But this is not a challenge that we as legislators can back

away from or an issue to play political football with, because more than anyone else who struggles with this challenge are children who need families.

Over the course of this month, I encourage all current and prospective adoptive parents to speak to their local MPP about their experiences. Stories of happiness and joy should inspire us. Those of delays, difficulties or frustration should spur us into action to ensure that every child in Ontario can have a loving, nurturing home.

1540

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. Wayne Gates: Canadians across the country have been partaking in Global Entrepreneurship Week, a week to network, discuss with one another and share their innovative ideas. The event aims to inspire and empower our next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders. The event takes place in more than 140 countries, with some 30,000 events being run. Here in Canada and Ontario, the focus has been on supporting our young entrepreneurs. It is my hope that young people will drive the economic recovery in this province.

I've been reading and listening to some of the comments made by this government when it comes to young people who want to take their ideas to the next level and benefit the province of Ontario. I actually think most of it is right. We do have the most talented young people in the world right here in Ontario. They are some of the smartest and hardest-working people you can find in the world. Young people in my riding in Niagara—it's easy to see them as future leaders. They're dedicated to what they love. It's incredible. They all want the opportunity to prove it. If we're committed to keeping our young people here in Ontario, we need to support them.

There are 42 campuses in Ontario that offer students a chance to start their own business. These are the kinds of students who thrive when opportunity is given to them. I'm glad they're being recognized this week, yet young people in Ontario continue to leave this province because of the high price of post-secondary education. We see it every day: talented young people graduating with \$30,000 or \$40,000 of debt without a job.

Then there are the young people who can't even afford to go to university or college. I saw these people during my campaign. They were incredibly talented. They were getting politically involved because they wanted to seek change. They didn't want to live in a province where they studied hard, worked hard and still couldn't afford post-secondary education. They can't thrive if they can't afford to go to school and nurture their talents. We need to make sure young people have access to affordable education and that they aren't graduating with debt they can't imagine.

We also need to make sure there are jobs are waiting for them when they graduate. We told them that if they worked hard and went to school, when they finished, there would be good-paying jobs waiting for them. They did their part. Now we have to do our part and make sure they have a future.

I hope the minister will continue to support our young people and push to make their education more affordable so that we can keep all these talented young people right here in Ontario.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour to respond to the minister, and I want to thank the minister for highlighting Adoption Awareness Month.

Many of us here know that I was a street-involved youth and actually slept just north of this building when I was 15, 16 and 17 in the park when I had to. I wasn't a crown ward, but in a sense, looking back, I should have been. So it's incredibly important that we highlight the 7,000 youth in care, as you heard the gentleman say, who need a home.

I wanted to also point out to the minister, however, that there are some issues that need to be addressed. Six years later, after 2007-08, when the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption called on the province to double the number of adoptions, we still only have 977. Back then, we had 822. So although 1,000 sounds like a lot, it's not double. It's not the aim that we should have. Only 5% of those youths were older than 13.

It also recommended a raise in the amount of money allocated to families who adopt a youth. It costs \$32,000 a year to keep a youth in care. We don't give that to families, who probably pay more than that to adopt a child who perhaps has special needs as a teenager.

The other thing I wanted to point out to her, and I know she must be looking at: I'm sure she probably saw the Fifth Estate program on rehoming children. Unfortunately, there's no law against that here. People may know that these are folk who adopt a child for free—because we should—and then go on to enter the private adoption arena and get money for adopting that child out again. This is an absolutely abysmal practice. It could happen here. It has been highlighted that it is happening in BC. We have to make sure it never happens here.

Finally, just on behalf of the Ontario New Democrats, I want to say thank you to all of those parents who did go this route, who did adopt a child perhaps with special needs, perhaps older—not the cute, little traditional baby—and who brought them into their family. They are in fact doubly blessed because we bless you and your child blesses you, and we thank you.

Thank you again to the minister. I know she's going to look at those shortcomings and make a difference.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It's now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

TOBACCO CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today I had the opportunity to introduce a bill to ban flavoured tobacco. I did not do that

alone; I did that with close to 57,000 youths who signed these postcards.

The petition reads as follows:

"More than half of youth who smoke use flavoured tobacco products. Flavoured tobacco products, like little cigars, chew tobacco and shisha, or hookah pipes, are available in brightly coloured, candy-like packages in common flavours like grape, cherry and piña colada. These tobacco products clearly appeal to youth and encourage tobacco use.

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban all flavoured tobacco products in Ontario."

I could not agree more. I will sign it and send all of those petitions with Jared, the very strong page I have with me.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's been sent to me by some of the clients of Mississauga Community Legal Services, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition, and send it down with page Moiz.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Kelsey.

MIDWIFERY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas midwifery care in Ontario is perfectly aligned with transforming the health care system toward quality care that uses resources effectively;

"Whereas midwives, who are primary care providers, ensure the provision of the right care, in the right place, and at the right time;

"Whereas the Minister of Health expressed commitment to work closely with midwives to ensure they have the support they need to carry out their work as well as grow the profession;

"Whereas midwifery in Ontario is currently being destabilized by negotiations that have broken down, a contract that expired on March 31, 2014, and a compensation structure that has not addressed pay equity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government resume negotiations with the Association of Ontario Midwives and enable midwives to continue to provide the highest standard of primary health care to women and their families."

I couldn't agree more, and I'm going to give it to Vida, to be delivered to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

1550

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organ-

izations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and I will give my petition to page Hannah.

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Coast Guard Auxiliary units are oftentimes the first responders to any emergency situation that occurs on our waterways;

"Whereas the use of green flashing lights by Coast Guard volunteers in their vehicles would help to cut down on their response time by alerting others on the roadways to their presence;

"Whereas these flashing green lights are currently prohibited from use in Coast Guard volunteers' vehicles under regulations in the Highway Traffic Act that restrict the use of flashing green lights to only the vehicles of volunteer firefighters and ministry-prescribed medical responders;

"Whereas the flashing green lights cost nothing to the government as they are bought and paid for by the volunteers themselves;

"Whereas, if the Coast Guard Auxiliary units were allowed the use of these flashing green lights in their vehicles, it would cut down the transportation time on the roadways, and this cut in time could very well mean the difference between life and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Coast Guard Auxiliary units either become prescribed medical responders, or a change to the act that adds ministry-prescribed volunteer first responders access to the use of the flashing green emergency light."

LEGAL AID

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I do have a petition here.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in

population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I will sign this petition and send it with Noah.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicles' emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2013 that they are, in fact, no longer among the major domestic emitters of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicles' emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emissions control technologies; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas this new emission test has caused numerous false 'fails', which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unneeded economic hardship and stress; and

"Whereas the Auditor General has found the program to be not effective with current technologies and has suggested that the government phase it out. On top of the program's ineffectiveness the Auditor General found the program started turning an illegal profit of almost \$19 million annually since 2011, something the program has done through unnecessary tests and fees;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the government must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program and its illegal profiting."

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Tyler.

UTILITY CHARGES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nonpayment of utility arrears by a tenant is not a ground for termination of a tenancy under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act, and landlords are forced to continue to house defaulting tenants to the financial detriment of landlords; and

"Whereas section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the 'act') allows a municipality to add public utility arrears incurred by a defaulting tenant to the municipal tax bill of the owner; and

"Whereas Ontario regulation 581/06 permits such arrears to have priority lien status under the act; and

"Whereas municipalities and utility providers maintain that they cannot disclose to the landlord whether a tenant's utility account is in default or the extent of such default due to privacy legislation; and

"Whereas landlords are burdened unfairly, and potentially catastrophically, with fees and charges they have no control over; and

"Whereas these provisions will also impact tenants who are not in arrears with their utility payments but who will now face rent increases and/or increases in utility payments where such payments are pooled as landlords attempt to recoup their outstanding liabilities; and

"Whereas municipalities and utility providers in Ontario already have at their disposal a number of means by which they can control or collect outstanding arrears, including by requiring deposits for the utility service pursuant to the Public Utilities Act and by seizing personal property in the possession of the ratepayer;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Repeal section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, and amend Ontario regulation 581/06 accordingly, to ensure that property owners are not responsible for the payment of outstanding utility arrears where they are not the consumer."

I was asked to present this petition. I will sign it and give it to Vida to present to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Windsor—Tecumseh for reading the entire act.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have a petition here from Mississauga Community Legal Services.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I agree with this petition. I am going to sign it and hand it over to page Johann.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here signed by a great many people, not only from Oxford riding but from all the surrounding ridings.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990...; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

1600

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition. I will sign it as I agree with it and I will send it with Hannah to the table.

OPPOSITION DAY

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move the following motion:

Whereas the government of Canada has failed to provide predictable funding to develop and deliver affordable, accessible and high-quality early childhood education and child care programs in Ontario;

Whereas families pay monthly fees of \$1,152 on average for one child care spot in Ontario, compared to \$152 per month in the province of Quebec;

Whereas investing in high-quality child care will reduce the stress on families; benefit children's development and future academic success; allow more parents to re-enter the workforce, retrain or go to school; reduce dependence on social assistance; reduce poverty; and will bring \$1.75 in return for every \$1 invested by our government;

Whereas families, businesses and the economy at large will benefit from investing in our early childhood education and child care programs;

Therefore, in the opinion of this House, this province should partner with the federal government to ensure that every parent in Ontario has access to child care at a cost of no more than \$15 a day per child.

This motion is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Horwath now has moved opposition day motion number 3. Back to the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm pleased to rise and bring this motion before the House today to deliver universal, affordable access to licensed child care to all families in Ontario. Frankly, I wish it wasn't necessary. I wish parents weren't still waiting for the day when they have

access to affordable, high-quality child care spaces no matter where they live in this province, and I wish we didn't have to debate in 2014 whether this province actually needs an affordable child care system. The answer should be obvious to every single one of us. Everywhere I go in this province, I hear from families struggling to find child care—child care they can afford, child care that doesn't eat up more than their rent, child care that lets them return to work to support their growing family, child care that they can trust and depend on to be there when they need it, child care that keeps their kids safe and helps them get the right start in life. I hear those concerns everywhere I go from parents at the mercy of a patchwork of services that do not meet their family's needs. I've heard their concerns, unfortunately, year after year after year.

In 2007, in fact, I introduced a private member's bill myself that would ensure that new child care licences would be awarded to not-for-profit child care centres, not big-box, for-profit daycare chains that reap the windfalls off the backs of hard-working families.

In 2012, New Democrats forced the government to inject \$242 million in child care funding to help save 2,000 child care subsidies in the city of Toronto alone that would have otherwise disappeared, and to stabilize our child care system overall.

In the last election, we were the only party that pledged to increase child care funding and to link it to inflation so that funding for child care would increase each and every year and not be eroded as the years go by. The fact is, more is needed. More needs to be done to tackle the huge scale of this problem. That's why I've introduced this motion today, which calls on the provincial government to commit to working with the federal government—a federal government led by Tom Mulcair of Canada's NDP—to deliver a universal child care system for just \$15 a day to every family that needs it.

Ontario needs to lead the way by signing on to that plan today; by being a willing partner and showing that we are ready to lead on this issue, because we cannot stand by while families struggle to find child care. We cannot say it's okay to have only one licensed child care space for every five kids in this province. We cannot say it's okay to let 20,000 families in Toronto alone languish on a wait-list for a subsidized child care spot. We cannot say it's okay to force parents and kids to fend for themselves when we could do so much better by working together. Yet that's the reality for far too many young families that face that reality day in and day out. That's the sad reality of child care in this province today. It is a reality that we actually have a responsibility to change.

As I'm speaking today, just down the hall the committee on social policy is hearing from child care providers and advocates about Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I want to say one thing about Bill 10: That bill is only necessary because of this government's neglect and its failure—the failure of many governments, in fact, over the years—to build an actual child care

system that meets the needs of every young family in this province.

If we had a real child care system, there would be enough spaces for every single child who needs one, and those spaces would be available without wait-lists and at a cost that parents could afford. Early childhood educators and child care workers would receive good wages in recognition of the value of their work and their education.

If we had a real child care system, subsidies would be available to all low-income families to eliminate the financial barriers that we now have to child care. Municipalities would have the funding that they need to support their local public child care centres. Parents would know when they dropped their children off at the start of the day that they'd be safe until they picked them up at the end of the day.

If we had a real child care system, no mother would have to choose between child care and her career.

But that system just doesn't exist today in Ontario, Speaker. It exists next door in Quebec, but not here. So I want to address at least five pervasive problems, problems that plague child care here in Ontario, problems that show us how much more work actually needs to be done.

First, there is the problem of access. The government readily admits that "only a fraction of children receive care in licensed settings." Only about 20% of children under age five have access to full- or part-time space at a child care centre.

The problem is all that much more difficult for infants. Approximately 100,000 infants are competing for just 10,000 licensed infant spaces this year. Those numbers reveal the extent of the shortage of licensed spaces for child care all over this province.

It is a sign that Ontario needs a real child care system. It's a sign that the status quo simply is not good enough. But even when families can find a space, cost is a huge barrier that stands in the way.

Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure of spending a lot of time in the wonderful community of Brampton. I've met hundreds of working moms and dads who are raising their families in that dynamic and diverse city. Brampton is a great city with such vibrancy and opportunity. It is a city that people from around the world call home. But when I talk to these parents, more often than not, they tell me how hard it is to find child care at a price that they can afford.

Those parents certainly weren't surprised to learn that Brampton is the least affordable city for child care in the entire country. In Brampton, child care fees are worth 36% of a working mom's income, meaning she has to work four whole months every year just to pay for child care. Who can afford that, Speaker? Which single mother holding onto three part-time jobs can afford that? Which new Canadian trying to start life in a new country can afford that? Yet the families of this province are on the hook for the highest child care costs in the country because governments leave parents to solve the problems on their own.

Here in Toronto, less than 25,000 fee subsidies are offered, reaching fewer than 50% of low-income kids. That's why Toronto city council has called on this province to deliver more subsidies and increase the number of licensed child care centres in this city.

This Liberal government should follow through and deliver on that request. If cutting child poverty is still on this government's agenda, that's exactly what they should do. But the fact is, it's not just the most vulnerable families who can't afford child care. The median cost for infant care here in Toronto is nearly \$1,700 every month—for one infant to be in child care. Families in London and Mississauga face toddler fees of over \$1,000 each and every month. Who can afford that? Which young working family still paying off student loans can afford that? Most importantly, can our province really afford to saddle young families with the burden of these high costs?

1610

For New Democrats, the answer is clearly no. Here's another sign that Ontario needs leadership to build a real child care system. Here's another sign that the status quo just is not good enough. There are 18 communities across our province, stretching from Windsor to Cochrane, from Kenora to Kingston, that have seen their child care funding cut by this Liberal government. These cuts, which average about 10% of funding, have already resulted in the closure of vital child care spaces in public and not-for-profit centres—exactly the type of child care centres we should be opening up, not shutting down.

About 40 good jobs are disappearing at the Coronation Park Day Nursery in Samia, which was attended by at least 100 children as of this past March. It makes absolutely no sense to cut child care funding to some communities, because no community can actually afford these cuts. It would cost less than \$18 million to stop these cuts and keep these child care centres open, but the Liberals refuse to budge. It's another sign that Ontario needs a real child care system. It's another sign that the status quo simply isn't good enough.

With so few affordable child care spaces to turn to, too many families are forced to rely on illegal child care. I'm not talking about unlicensed home child care provided by a caregiver who follows the rules and looks after the few kids in the neighbourhood. I'm talking about illegal child care centres, illegal child care operations flouting the rules to make a quick buck while putting kids' lives in danger. In a seven-month period within the past two years, at least four children died in illegal daycare operations. That is the clearest sign of a broken system that it is our obligation, in this House, to fix.

Speaker, the deaths of children are something we cannot ignore. It is a price we cannot afford to pay, and it's one of the very best reasons to build a proper child care system based on universal and affordable access to high-quality licensed child care.

Last month, the Ombudsman released a scathing report—an indictment, frankly—of this government's negligence when it comes to conducting inspections and enforcing the law against illegal child care operations.

The Ombudsman concluded that “systemic government ineptitude” puts kids at risk for years. It's a startling and distressing report that describes the government's efforts to regulate child care as “sloppy,” “inconsistent,” “inadequate,” “patently defective,” “alarming” and “ridiculous.” These are the words of our Ombudsman to describe the way that this government regulates our child care in this province. It's a disgrace.

The problem, though, is not just a matter of government neglect. Illegal daycares exist in Ontario in the shadows and in the gaps, the gaps where properly functioning, publicly funded, not-for-profit child care systems should exist. That is the surest sign of failure, because when we cannot keep kids safe, when we cannot make that guarantee to parents, we know that the status quo is acceptable no more.

Now is the time to build the child care system that our province needs. There is a new sense of momentum in Ontario and right across the country, a new sense that families cannot wait any longer, a new sense that we cannot afford to delay any longer, a new sense that progress is not only desperately needed, but actually possible. This is, in large part, the result of years of commitment by tremendous child care activists and advocates. They have been telling governments to do the right thing, and for the better part of a decade, they've received the cold shoulder from the Harper government, a government that promised to create 125,000 new child care spaces but has failed to open even one single new spot.

It's against that Conservative record, a record of ignoring the families of this province, that the federal NDP and our leader, Tom Mulcair, have put forward a real plan to deliver a child care space for every kid who needs one, at a cost of just \$15 a day. New Democrats have recognized the problem. We have heard the pleas of parents. Most importantly, most fundamentally, New Democrats understand that some things in life can only be done when we do them together. That's how our province and our country built the public services that we have today.

At some point, when people looked around and saw seniors living in abject poverty, living in deplorable conditions after contributing so much, they decided to stop ignoring the problem and to build a social security system that helps more seniors live with dignity in their old age.

At some point, people looked around and saw children working in mines rather than going to school. They decided to build a publicly funded education system so that children of the working class were not left behind.

At some point, workers decided that injuries and deaths on the job were not acceptable and they demanded laws to protect the health and safety of employees on the job.

At some point, we decided that health care should be based on need, not the ability to pay, and we built a public health care system that we hold dear in this country.

At some point, we decided that public assets worked better for all of us when they are owned by all of us.

That is a principle New Democrats will always defend, because that is how progress is made: by deciding at some point that a problem facing families can no longer be ignored, by deciding that the cost of doing nothing is far too great, and by deciding that people—the families, the children of this province—come first above all else. That is how we make progress. That is the only way that progress has ever been made. And that is precisely what we need to decide today in order to make real progress on building the child care system that our province needs.

The time has come to say that we will not leave families to fend for themselves. The time has come to recognize that the rewards of a child care system far, far outweigh the costs. The time has come to acknowledge that inaction is the worst thing we can do. And the time to do that is today.

This motion is our opportunity, as a province, to stand up to the federal government and to say we will not watch families struggle any longer. This is the moment to stand up alongside Tom Mulcair and to support his plan to ensure that every Ontario family and every family across this great nation of ours can access child care for just \$15 a day. This is the time to stand with the families of this province, to let them know that we will work for them, we will listen to them, and we will deliver the universal child care system that has never been in closer reach and has never been more desperately needed.

Speaker, I look forward to the rest of the debate and thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to stand up and talk to the motion from the leader of the third party.

Before I talk specifically to her motion, I would like to congratulate the member of the third party, the leader of the NDP, for her resounding vote of confidence from the convention last weekend. I had the pleasure of attending the conference as an observer of our party and had a chance to listen to the member's speech. I tell you, it was a barnburner. It was delightful to see her with that fire back in her belly, that commitment to move forward.

We've tracked her directions over the years. We tracked when she was first elected as a self-proclaimed socialist and looking at some very left-leaning causes that she championed back before the 2011 election. Then, during the 2011 election—there was a subtle shift after the election, where she became more of a pragmatist, a realist. And then, as we saw in the last election, moving so significantly towards the right and competing for Tory votes, becoming the fiscal fighter, the champion of deficit reduction—this was the direction she was going. I appreciate the direction that took because, having turned down the most progressive budget we've seen here in decades, I was no doubt a great beneficiary of that direction.

1620

Watching this transformation of the leader of the third party coming back once again to her progressive roots—I'm just delighted to welcome her back here. With the

support she's obviously getting from her caucus, it will be a much better three and a half years knowing she is there in that position to do so. It is very clear from her motion here today and from her speech at the convention that she has consulted with her colleagues—that she's come back to this position. This motion is clearly in line with this new, progressive direction the member is taking, and we welcome it, because it's a direction that our party has been supporting all along. It's a direction in finding opportunities for daycare spaces that we agree with wholeheartedly.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So are you going to vote for the motion?

Mr. Arthur Potts: You know what? We are really, really encouraged to vote for this motion, because I think it does mirror the things we have been talking about as a party; it mirrors what our federal cousins are talking about as a party. When we talk about universal daycare, I believe that's a concept that very much resonates in federal Liberalism. It's a concept that my good friend Paul Martin—this is where the expression was coined. We're going down a direction that is so important for us, to bring in a much more universal daycare program, and we're working hard to make sure that that in fact happens.

I compare this motion to the first motion that the leader of the opposition brought just last week—I had the pleasure to speak to that as well—where we were looking at issues around referendums. This is not the progressive direction we would have anticipated: her membership talking about spending taxpayers' money and having votes on all issues and referendums and recalls. Those are such far-right concepts, and I'm delighted to see that we've come back to a socially progressive cause: daycare spaces.

I'm also delighted to see in the motion that the member is tying it to these discussions we should be having with the federal government. We don't disagree with her. I believe that the federal government is extraordinarily remiss in its partnership in moving forward in this direction.

Also, we seem to be tying this whole debate to what is going on in the province of Quebec. I think that's a very apt comparison. We have to be very clear that Quebec's daycare system is being financed on the backs of Ontario taxpayers. Let us understand the deficit situation between what is collected in taxes in the province of Ontario that does not come back to us, and compare that with the amount of money collected in the province of Quebec that goes back to the province of Quebec. They, in Quebec, are clearly net gainers from Confederation, whereas in Ontario we're net losers to the tune of \$11 billion a year. If we had the same level of subsidy per taxpayer in Ontario as they have in Quebec, \$15-a-day daycare would be more attainable. It would be something we could aspire to.

So, while we may be inclined to support the motion, I'm not sure we will concur in the financial expenses she is claiming—the average cost of daycare in the prov-

ince—nor with whether \$15 is the right, sustainable solution moving forward. We have to find a right number. We need to make daycare affordable. That is a direction our party is clearly going forward with.

We have done so much in the area of child care. The leader of the third party referenced the Child Care Modernization Act. This is very clearly an important direction we are taking in order to ensure that children are safe. The member talks about mothers who are leaving their children and worried about their safety. But let me remind her that it is fathers, too, who are concerned about making sure their children are in safe, licensed—or at least safe, unlicensed—daycare settings.

As a parent myself, this was a decision I took: I left my job, because my partner wanted to go back to work. Our child was six months old, and we weren't prepared to just have a six-month-old go into a daycare space—it would have been an unlicensed space with a neighbour looking after two or three children at the time. So I stayed home and took a leave of absence from my job; in fact, I quit my job. I made a career decision that it was more important for me to support my child at the age of six months, to allow my partner to go back to work.

I know that the number one thing that men in the workforce can do to support women in the workforce is not to make the decision around child care just the women's decision. Right? I took that step. And this was before parental leave was on the books; this was before I had a chance to be paid to take that time off under the unemployment system. I made the decision because it was important to me to go down that direction.

Our Child Care Modernization Act is looking to create safe licensed and safe unlicensed spaces. I think it's very interesting that the member has focused exclusively on licensed daycare spaces. We in our party believe that unlicensed spaces have a critical role to play in serving the needs of our young children.

The issue had become that in some unlicensed situations, it was becoming unsafe. The recommendations—as a result of some tragic deaths—were very clear that we had to have rules prescribing how many children at certain ages it was safe to care for in an unlicensed daycare space, and so we've done that. That bill is in the middle of clause-by-clause consideration, and that is extremely important. At the same time, by changing the rules around licensed spaces, we think we will be encouraging so many of the unlicensed daycare spaces to become licensed daycare spaces, increasing the oversight, which allows them to have more children in the system. This is the way we will be building up licensed spaces while protecting the right of some families, considering the right numbers of kids, to be in their unlicensed homes, being treated, we believe, in a safe, efficient and cost-affordable sort of way.

This is the direction that we are going in, and we have done other things. We have introduced full-day kindergarten. This is taking so many children out of the need for child care in the mornings and the afternoons. There are 470,000 children who are benefiting from full-day

kindergarten at the ages of four and five. We know that this program in itself is saving the average family \$6,500 a year. We know that this has had a great impact on making sure that children are being cared for. They're in the school system, full day. They're learning. They're getting early education. The records show that these children will be better educated going into grade 1 than they otherwise would have been. Their parents don't have to be as concerned about them, and they can go off to work and do what they need to do there.

Mr. Speaker, you have to appreciate that we've also increased child care funding by almost 90% since 2003. We've gone from about \$530 million annually in child care funding to just under \$1 billion. We have created over 130,000 new daycare spaces. We believe that we are doing our part, but that doesn't mean that we can't be entering into long-term conversations with our federal counterparts. I would encourage every single member of this House to be sure that the issue of universal daycare and adequate funding at the federal level, in partnership with the province, is in front of us in the next election campaign. We should make this a critical issue so that all three parties are going to move forward federally with a plan to bring in daycare. We will partner with them regardless of who is in power. I appreciate the member's comments about doing things together; that will be our plan.

As I said earlier, it's our intention, I believe, for our caucus to support this bill, but with that visceral attack that we took, it really becomes irksome: Do we really want to give that satisfaction? But I believe we do, because I think the needs of our children are so important that we will work very hard in partnership, even with our friends opposite, even if their tone is not nice. We will work very hard to ensure that our children are well cared for and that they're safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Beaches—East York.

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the NDP's opposition day motion on child care. This is an important issue. We all understand how much parents need access to good, reliable child care. Parents need to know that they are leaving their children in a safe place when they go to work. Parents need those daycare spaces to be available when they need them. We've all heard from parents who are struggling to find a place or who were told by a daycare that the only way to get one was to put their name on a list before they actually started thinking about having children.

I recently received an email from a constituent who said, "As a mother in a small community I rely on home daycare. Leaving my son at 12 months with another person was so hard, but she has been a wonderful person in our lives." She went on to say, "My family needs my income to support our family, and I don't have the opportunity to stay at home."

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Mr. Speaker, I think that people like that would be pleased to know that we are talking about child care, but

they will be disappointed to know that we are spending our time talking about a resolution which can't be implemented by anyone in this Legislature. Too often it seems that when you don't have a solution to a problem, people try to blame another government or put forward a resolution that calls on someone else to address the problem. It has become that way to try and shift the focus off our responsibility, a way to distract people from the places where this government should be doing better, a way to look like we are fighting for things that we can't afford.

We had this fight for years with the business risk management program for our farmers, where the government avoided their responsibility by saying that they were waiting for the federal government when they knew that the federal government wasn't going to participate. In fact, yesterday one of the headlines after the fall economic statement read, "Charles Sousa Targets Conservative Government in Economic Update." The government has brought forward numerous resolutions targeting the federal government, but they haven't resulted in real action.

Today's resolution, unfortunately, is the same. There's no plan to find the money to pay for this daycare, no plan on how it would be implemented, and it is dependent on another level of government that we here in this House don't control.

There are too many parents struggling with the high cost of daycare, absolutely. Should Ontario be treated fairly? Yes, and we can have arguments all day about whether we are, but that won't change a thing for many people in Ontario who depend on daycare. The people are depending on us to spend our time on actions and debates where we can make a difference.

We have a bill before this Legislature, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, which will have a significant impact on the future of child care in Ontario. It's something that constituents in my riding and people across Ontario are concerned about. I think we've all received emails and phone calls about it from parents and daycare providers. Unfortunately, the government chose to time-allocate Bill 10, cutting off debate, which means that MPPs don't have the ability to raise the concerns that we're hearing.

I'd like to share a few of the emails I've received. One of my constituents wrote:

"While I agree that there needs to be many changes made to the current model being used, the current proposed act, as written, will gravely affect many families that I know, including my own.

"My sister and I currently run an at-home unlicensed daycare together. I worked over 10 years as a legal assistant, although after I completed my maternity leave there was no way that I could return to work. I needed to be home with my daughter. My sister also had recently finished her maternity leave and was feeling just the same as myself.

"After much discussion with our families, we felt starting an at-home daycare together was a perfect deci-

sion. We came from a large family and both loved children.

"We spent many hours doing our research, trying to determine if we should join an agency or start out on our own. From our research with other daycare providers and parents, we came to the unfortunate conclusion that an agency was nothing more than a cash grab, with the added disadvantage of more restrictions on the allowable number of children we could care for.

"In my opinion, being licensed or unlicensed does not mean better or worse care; it just depends on the actual provider.

"Once we decided being unlicensed was in our best interest, we then set out on our research of what would be required of us and what the law would permit.

"Since my sister would be coming to my home with her son each day, we called the ministry in order to have clarification on our allowable numbers.

"We were advised he would count as one of our allowable five and that my child would not count in the numbers. We then obtained police record checks, obtained daycare insurance, renewed our CPR and first aid training.

"I spent countless hours preparing a handbook and a contract, from precedents I found online from other home daycare providers. One of the lawyers from the firm where I previously worked took the time to review all the documents and make suggestions, as well as amendments.

"As you can see, my sister and I put a lot of heart and effort into our ... careers."

She goes on to explain that now that she has had another child, under the new rules, she and her sister will only be allowed two additional children. They believe the sister's house isn't suitable for a daycare, but if her sister was to operate from there under this act, she would be allowed four additional children, not the two that they are limited to if they operate in the same house.

Unlike the resolution put forward by the third party, if Bill 10 passes, there will be a real impact on these families and the parents who depend on them for daycare.

When the minister introduced the act, I doubt that she took into account situations like this. One of the things that I've learned from talking to people impacted by this act is that all of their situations are different and it's going to be a challenge for the legislation to get it right.

Another constituent wrote:

"Basically, if I have five children here for preschool and one of my children has to come home for any reason," that would be illegal. "I can't have more than five children, including my own. How am I to make up for this? Raise my rates to have less children just in case?"

We need to make sure that we are protecting our children while at the same time providing parents with the number of child care spaces and the choices they need. We need to make sure that the government is closing down providers who cannot meet standards or put our children in danger while, at the same time, encour-

aging hard-working people who are putting the interests of our children first.

It's not an easy task, and I'm not going to pretend that I have all of the answers. I want to commend the third party for giving us an opportunity to debate the important issue of child care so that, hopefully, we can start to find more ways to help these families.

I believe that one of the first steps has to be for the ministry to be properly monitoring and inspecting these daycares. We heard that the ministry failed to answer 25 of 448 complaints made about unlicensed daycare between January 1, 2012, and January 12, 2013. They failed to follow up right away with site visits on 24 complaints, 18 of which were in Barrie and Vaughan and two in London. If the ministry can't monitor what they have now, how are they going to look after any more daycare?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Ontario has a child care crisis. We don't have enough licensed, non-profit subsidized child care spots for our children. What we have instead is a patchwork system with long lists, high costs and questionable safety.

Our federal NDP counterparts have made it a matter of focus and priority. In fact, this past summer, Thomas Mulcair kicked off his discussions about child care in Oshawa. We held a round table with community members invested in and challenged by child care issues. The issues around that table, across our community and typical across the province are significant and far-reaching. If families are able to find a child care space, they pay the highest costs in Canada. As stated in our motion today, families pay monthly fees of \$1,152 on average for one child care spot in Ontario compared to \$152 per month in the province of Quebec. Quite simply, the costs have become unmanageable for families in Ontario.

At our local round tables, we listened to voices from across our community. We know that the people of this province want to work and that they struggle to find affordable child care. The reality in Oshawa and across our province is that many parents work opposite shifts so that they can alternate and provide care for their children. Spouses don't see each other because they can't afford child care, and families are literally being separated.

We heard from a single mother who is trying to work to pay the bills and trying to secure a spot for her child with autism, which is no small challenge. We heard from parents who are students wishing there were child care options on or near campus. We heard from families struggling to repay huge student debt, pay rising housing costs and afford care for their kids. We heard from members of our francophone child care community who fill francophone child care spaces just as soon as they are made available. Every section of our community needs affordable child care.

We heard from families whose children age out before they're even off the waiting list. In Oshawa, that list is

about two years long. Many parents' incomes go entirely to child care. Today, it is unimaginable to survive on a single income with children without struggling.

Since introducing the NDP's affordable child care plan, Tom Mulcair has been back to the Oshawa area to hear from real families about the difference that this plan will make to their lives.

One mother and her husband were planning to put their young son in child care so that she could take classes to improve her skills and get into the workforce. Instead, they've discovered that the costs are so astronomical that they cannot afford it. Her husband has to work overtime to make ends meet and has to spend more time away from his new family. This child care plan is for them.

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We also met with another young mom who is looking for a job, and she's been looking for two years. The only jobs she can find are in Toronto and she can't afford to take the train and pay for child care. She wanted to be a mom. She did not want to be forced onto social assistance and out of a job, but that's our system. This child care plan is for her too.

Plain and simple, the cost of child care in Ontario is a barrier. It is a barrier to families trying to get off social assistance. It is a barrier to families trying to go to school to better their lives. It is a barrier to women simply trying to enter the workforce. There are too many barriers to women when it comes to the workforce.

In the Toronto Star, just today, a recent poll of working women found that more than 50% of women who responded perceived that absences due to family obligations or possible maternity leaves would prevent them from advancing to senior roles in their workplace. The employment firm that sponsored this survey, Randstad Canada—senior vice-president Faith Tull said this about why women aren't climbing the ladder at work: "We are the sandwich generation. We're taking care of elderly parents and we're taking care of kids. Then we're balancing careers. When organizations are not showing they are embracing the uniqueness of those pulls and pushes, then we don't think we can do it."

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of systemic barriers to women and families. In short, we need to acknowledge and address the challenges that families are facing. As members of provincial Parliament, it is our job to make life easier for Ontarians, to encourage growth in our economy and to move our province forward. By investing in affordable child care, we can achieve all of these aims at once, and it is an issue we cannot afford to wait on.

Thank you to the other speakers and to those listening today. I urge you to make child care a focus in our province and support this motion. Our families are worth the investment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Oshawa.

Further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am happy to have the opportunity here today to speak to this motion and to talk

about our responsible plan to modernize child care. As a parent, I can tell you there is nothing more important than safe, quality and affordable child care for our children. Child care has always been one of the top priorities of our government, and we are happy to see the NDP treating it with the same degree of importance.

In Ontario, our government has made a lot of progress to improve the care we provide our youngest children, to help their families and to support the educators and staff who provide that care day in and day out. Child care providers provide a strong foundation for our youngest learners, and we remain committed to modernizing child care in Ontario.

Since 2003, our government has prioritized child care and early child care education. We remain committed to ensuring that families have access to safe, modern child care to make sure our kids get the best possible start. It is our hope that this plan will include a real partnership with the federal government to increase the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care in the province.

Our government will continue to call on all federal parties to adopt a national child care program in their 2015 election platforms. We would like to work with a willing federal partner to increase access and strengthen the quality of licensed child care providers as core priorities of such a program. All of Canada's federal parties should be talking about child care. This is too important an issue to be swept under the rug and ignored by those who make decisions.

Providing opportunities to give our kids the best start in life must be a top national priority. But instead, the federal government has prioritized divisiveness and short-sightedness when it comes to solving the problems Canadians are facing.

When the federal government was elected in 2006, one of the first things they did was cancel the Canada-Ontario child care agreement. In 2007, Canada had the distinction of being at the bottom of the OECD list of countries' investments in child care and early learning. Again, this month, a new study by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons noted that Canada only spends 0.25% of the GDP on child care, while most other OECD countries spend 1% on child care. This is not the direction we want our future to be heading in. The importance of investing in our young people cannot be overstated.

That is why I stand with the Ontario government in calling on the federal government and all federal parties to reassess their national child care strategy and to make sure they join us in doing their best to give young Canadians the best chances in life.

When it comes to child care, I'm proud to be standing alongside my Liberal colleagues on this side of the House. When the federal government turned their backs to a national child care strategy, the Ontario government stepped up to the plate and invested in programs to help children and families. We stepped in with an investment of \$63.5 million a year to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government after they abandoned

their child care strategy. Since 2003, child care funding has increased from \$532.4 million to close to \$1 billion a year. That's a 90% increase, and that's remarkable. Starting in 2014-15, our government is also investing an additional \$33.6 million over three years to further support the ongoing operation and modernization of the child care system.

According to a report released by the Atkinson Centre last week, Ontario spends the most on early childhood education, more than any other province. In addition, we will provide wage increases of \$1 an hour in 2015 and \$1 an hour in 2016 for child care workers working outside the public school system, and we increased the Ontario Child Benefit by \$100 in July 2014.

Investing in our young people is one of the best things we can do for our community, and we need to be doing it in every community across the provinces.

Let me talk about my own riding. In my own riding of Halton, even as we deal with population growth and massive infrastructure expansion, we have not forgotten about the need to put our children first. Halton's population grew 56.5% between 2006 and 2011, with the majority of new residents being young or growing families, and we've had to make sure we can deal with the influx of young children. Today in Halton, we have 38 schools and close to 6,000 kids enrolled in full-day kindergarten. That's 6,000 children being given the tools and opportunities to succeed later in life.

In September, I was fortunate to visit a school in my riding, Hawthorne Village, to see its full-day kindergarten program in action. It was extraordinary. The level of innovation, engagement, and simply joy that the young children were experiencing was inspiring. This is just one example of the many success stories from around the province.

But more needs to be done, and we call upon all parties and all levels of government to join with us in recognizing and addressing the need to put our children first, to give them the early advantages that they need to succeed.

So the province of Ontario has invested billions of dollars in child care and full-day kindergarten, but we need a national daycare strategy to prepare our future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Halton for the debate.

The member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to join the child care debate in this assembly right now. I've relished, since the opportunity to arrive here in 2006, to discuss child care and my beliefs as a Progressive Conservative on how child care should be developed in this province.

I noticed the member from Halton talking a bit about the 2006 election, and I remember that election because it was my little girl who was with Prime Minister Harper, then opposition leader, as he announced he would be directly investing in our children by giving parents \$100 a month for their child care needs. I must say, I appreciated that and I appreciate his long-standing commitment to trust mothers and fathers with their children.

In fact, I view this legislation today before us by the NDP and the support by the Liberal government, and in fact their Bill 10, which is before this assembly as well, as a move to an expensive babysitting bureaucracy first put forward by Paul Martin between 2004 and 2006. It will be expensive, but most importantly it will eliminate parental choice, it will eliminate parental responsibility and it will actually drive up taxes across this province and the rest of this country. As a Progressive Conservative, I believe in and I value parental responsibility. As a Progressive Conservative, I value parental choice. I don't believe that this will be successful, if these government-paid bureaucracies for children are implemented.

1650

In fact, what I believe will happen is that you will look in urban centres where there will be institutional child care for our children, yet in suburban and high-growth areas—like in Halton, like in Oakville, like in south Ottawa, like in Brampton—it will be more difficult for people to find the care that they need. In addition, it will be very catastrophic for rural Ontario. I can understand why the Liberals wouldn't understand anything about rural Ontario, given that they've been effectively shut out of those communities.

But let me say this: I think that this is just picking a fight on behalf of Thomas Mulcair and on behalf of Justin Trudeau for the 2015 election. I don't believe that that serves our purposes as legislators here in the province of Ontario.

In fact, we have a bill before the assembly, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, which I believe is equally as problematic for child care in the province. In fact, what we know from Bill 10—and public hearings are ongoing as I speak right now—we know that the Liberals will eliminate 140,000 child care spaces in independent settings across Ontario. We know, for example, that as a result of that, that will increase parental contributions to child care by as much as 30% to 40%, making child care less affordable in the province of Ontario almost immediately.

We know that those who will be affected most by what the NDP are proposing and what the Liberals are proposing are Montessori schools, who will be affected by their pedagogy as well as their ability to recruit people into their communities. We know that independent and religious schools will also be affected based on the curriculum issues. We're hearing, as we speak, from people in Boys and Girls Clubs across Ontario that there may be a negative impact on them as well, based on the recreational requirements.

These are all issues that we are dealing with in the assembly today. They are all issues that the government is not addressing. They are issues that the Liberals and the NDP would like to gloss over, as they want to take away parental choice and responsibility from moms and dads across this province, who demand flexibility in their care, demand affordability for their care and demand that their children are cared for in an accessible way in their own communities. That is not what these two parties

stand for, but as a Progressive Conservative, I assure you, those are the things that my colleagues and I stand for. We actually think it is not a problem if a mother stays at home. We don't think it is a problem if Grandma looks after their children. We don't think it's a problem if a loving neighbour is going to help out a family in need.

In fact, that is what has brought me here to this assembly—because as a young mother, when I first arrived here, we did have in-home child care for my daughter. In fact, my husband and I still have our friend Myrna Hay, who spent over 40 years volunteering in my daughter's school, look after our daughter.

Who better to make a decision on child care than a parent? If the Liberals think and if the NDP think that we should take away parental responsibility, then that is their prerogative, but it will never be the prerogative of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

In fact, I also would like to point this out: In the Bill 10 hearings, those who supported the government's legislation were those who were almost entirely funded or fully funded by the government of Ontario. Why did they support this bill? Because they stand to gain the most. I don't think that's right.

I think that there are a lot of independent child care operators out there. There's the association of daycare providers of Ontario. There are Montessori schools. There are private independent schools. There are private religious schools. There are other organizations out there that are quite capable of looking after our children—but don't take away parental choice. Don't take away parental responsibility. It almost seems as if the Liberals and the NDP would choose to take our children from us at six months old and put them into an institutionalized setting until they're 18. I don't agree with that. That's a nanny state. I don't believe in that. I believe that every parent, when they have a child, has a responsibility to ensure their child's safety, and I believe that they have a responsibility for a choice in child care.

I also believe that it is the government's role to create regulations and to enforce them. This is where we are today in the health care and child care debate in this province: We are in a situation where the government didn't do its job; it didn't enforce its regulations. They have let children down who have not only been injured in care but they have died in care, and that is on the government of Ontario. However, Speaker, don't take my word for it; take the Ombudsman's word for it.

So as I stand here right now to defend my parental choice and my parental rights and my parental responsibilities, I can tell you that I, as a Progressive Conservative, believe that the best person to look after your child is you. That is not something I share with the NDP, and it's not something I share with the Liberals, because they think it is the government's job to look after your child. And in so doing, they take away your obligations as a parent.

This is something I have seen over the past couple of days in the committee hearings on Bill 10, and it is something I am now starting to see is going to take shape

in the 2015 election, notwithstanding the fact that not once, not twice, but three times the current federal government was elected on a platform of choice in child care. If that is something this assembly chooses to ignore, based on the coalition developing between the Liberals and the NDP, that will be their choice. But I can assure you that I will continue to defend mothers and fathers across this province who want to have a say in where their children get their care, who delivers that care and where they get the care in their community. I see that we have a growing array of opportunities and options for mothers and fathers, and I think that needs to be extended.

We must remember as well that the Liberals first started trying to bring in this universal child care that Paul Martin first talked about in 2004 and 2006, when they brought in full-day learning, which significantly hampered many of the child care spots across this province, particularly those that are licensed or unlicensed. That's the reality. This is just the extension of a government policy that is bound and determined to have our children raised by the state rather than raised by us. They simply don't trust us. I think that is a shame, and it's something I'll continue to oppose. I don't understand why they would refuse to allow grandmothers, neighbours or even in-home child care facilities or licensed child care facilities across the province to look after our children if that is what we choose.

I understand, from the enormous amount of heckles and hoots and hollers, particularly from the older gentlemen in this assembly, that they don't think that I, as a mother, should be looking after my own child. In fact, they want to tell me how to look after my child. And I respectfully—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Hamilton-Stoney Creek, come to order, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Child care is a very passionate debate, particularly for those of us young mothers in this assembly who want to share our views and have our needs in child care met.

Speaker, I'll relate this story I will tell you back to 2007, and then I'd like to share my time with one of my colleagues.

In the 2007 election my father passed away in the first week of the campaign. My daughter was just under two years old; she was about 18 months old. She was quite sick. And obviously I had dealt with a significant loss, at the age of 32.

At that time, I was trying to do some campaigning. And if it weren't for our in-home child care provider and the flexibility she provided us, I'm not sure how we would have gotten through that very difficult time in our lives. During that time, my little girl—she's nine now and she's a very healthy little girl—had contracted a bug. We weren't sure what it was; we weren't sure if it was viral or bacterial. But she had a very difficult time keeping her food down. So we had to deal with significant diarrhea; we had to deal with significant vomiting. We

would take her almost nightly to the Queensway Carleton Hospital, by my home. Finally they said, "Please take her to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario," where my daughter was on intravenous during that campaign, about two weeks after my father died.

Given the constraints during that time, if we did not have our independent child care operator helping us, providing her with that detailed level of care, I don't know what would have happened. I really don't know if I'd still be standing here today. That is why I am so passionate.

When the members opposite decide they want to drown my voice, when they decide they want to stop people with a different perspective than them by heckling as they are now, it not only infuriates me but it drives me more in my passion for choice in child care, because I believe that every parent should have choice. At the same time, they have obligations and responsibilities, because they are parents. I believe that has to happen. But in no way, shape or form will I ever cede my parental responsibility or my parental choice to the New Democrats or to the Liberals. And I will tell you, as a defender of choice in child care, that I reject this motion and I'll be looking forward to voting against it. Thank you very much.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have to say I'm so glad that was on the record, because I don't think anyone would actually believe what the member for Nepean—Carleton said. I'm going to go and cut and paste that and put it in my scrapbook for my next election when we have a debate with the Conservative Party over "conservative."

First of all, I want to sincerely congratulate the—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I thought you weren't running again.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, I'm running again. If I wasn't before, I am after that speech. So you can take personal credit for it.

I want to commend the member of the New Democratic Party on her affirmation last weekend, on a successful convention. Congratulations. It's tough to lead a party these days. As any of us who have been in political leadership know, we dish it out to each other. I remember I gave her a little bit of a difficult time before. Such is the nature of partisan politics.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, no, but it is. I get it pretty good from my friends over in the third party sometimes, and sometimes deservedly. Hopefully, we don't take those things personally and we try to keep some humour in it.

In my lifetime, I have been a member of the Liberal Party, in my youth a member of the NDP, and in my municipal career in what was, I think, a rather remarkable coalition, working with Greg Selinger, who is currently the Premier, and many others in building a progressive coalition in municipal politics. I think a lot of us who have worked in local government did that.

You can, and it will be done today, make criticisms of the Liberals and Conservatives and the New Democrats.

In our case, we Liberals and New Democrats tend to criticize each other for not being pure or good enough or for who's better on child care. I think it's a little bit ridiculous.

I actually give real credit to the New Democrats for bringing forward this motion. I will certainly be actively supporting it, and I'm led to believe that most of my colleagues around the table here will be as well.

I've often said in this House, and you've heard me say it many times, that I like Thursday afternoon because we do private members' bills. It's the least partisan and when we, as members of this House, reclaim our position to be members of this House first.

This is a very good example of something that I think we should do more of. It takes some willingness by a majority government to be able to reach out. I take this as a pretty positive offering from the third party, that these are the kinds of things that we should do. We have gotten too partisan before. I remember when Paul Martin and Ken Dryden worked so very hard and we almost had brokered a national child care agreement, and that was so hard. I remember because I had just been mayor of the capital city. I was working as chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. I remember how excited so many of us were at that moment.

I don't think we can afford to let those opportunities slip away any more. Obviously, after our friend from Nepean-Carleton, if this goes forward it will happen because of New Democrats and Liberals working together here and hopefully working together in Ottawa to create the kind of pressure.

I grew up in Quebec. My sister was a single mom whose husband left her, which was probably a good thing. She had three children. I know that the child care system in Quebec was one that allowed her to get a nursing degree mid-life and to restart her life in ways that women don't often get to do.

But I will also tell you that in my years chairing the Big City Mayors' Caucus, the 22 mayors, we would often talk at that time, particularly Ontario and later Alberta, about how much of our child care infrastructure in Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg when I was mayor was paid for by Ontarians. I would estimate that probably—I mean, the entire budget of the province of Manitoba at the time was \$6 billion. The transfers out of Ontario were three times that. You know, the floodway, the human rights' museum, and a lot of the social infrastructure in the so-called have-not provinces—I've always hated that name, but more modest-income provinces with smaller populations and smaller economic bases because of the geography—are paid for by the big provinces, by places like Ontario.

I knew in Quebec, growing up, that Quebec was in a net deficit situation. Quebec struggled economically through the 1970s and 1980s, and it built this remarkable child care system a lot with the tax dollars coming out of Ontario and other provinces. As much as we're a federalized state, we sometimes seem to get—and it was on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*: "Which province is doing better and which isn't?" I always remind

people that it was the Atlantic Canadian provinces whose Maritime wood, forestry and fishery actually built the railroads that allowed the rest of us to prosper. Now that some of those Maritime economies are more modest than they were in their contributions to the federalist thing, it's important.

This is the kind of thing that we should work more on together. I'm very proud of early childhood education, and I think most of us would say that that was a very good move. It's not perfect, and we'll all point out where there are shortcomings, as with every program, but it's a really good program. I look at low-income kids in St. James Town and in Moss Park, and I just look at their self-confidence and the abilities their moms and their dads have that they didn't have before we had early childhood education. The child care providers in my community in Toronto Centre, which I know is very similar to many other members in this House, have really adapted to that.

It's interesting. In the Catholic school system—Jo-Ann Davis is my Catholic school trustee—we really worked out a strategy with their child care providers. We were really successful at creating, at the neighbourhood levels—a lot of the moms who had a number of kids, who had often been providing those services for each other co-operatively, almost like a shared babysitting service, actually were able to improve and get into child care.

We can beat up one of these things against the other. They're complementary issues, and they're things that we should be working on together. I think there are some things that divide us from the Conservatives of today—not necessarily the Conservatives of Bill Davis or some of the others—that are really historic. I was pretty offended in some ways by some of the things the member for Nepean-Carleton said. Why? Because I didn't have a mom at home when I started in life. I didn't have a dad at home. I actually was entirely dependent on the state. My mother was 16. She couldn't have a child. I'm not a lesser person; she made a difficult choice. My son Michael—the most dangerous people in his life were one set of parents he had.

This idea that somehow parental choice for the Conservatives is this God-given right and that if the state interferes—that the rights of parents trump everything: That is the most elitist, ridiculous position I have ever heard. I spent 12 years working on the streets of two cities. Every single child I saw—to my friends in the official opposition—80% of them were on the street because they were raped by their fathers; thrown down a flight of stairs by their mothers; given alcohol at age two. I fostered and adopted kids who had bones broken before they were six years old.

I heard from my friends in the NDP, and I've heard from all of my colleagues over here in the Liberal Party. My friend from Peterborough was joking about how close we are on this issue, and I agree with him, because there are certain points of principle where you agree. The difference between New Democrats and Liberals vis-à-

vis Conservatives is that we actually think that children's safety trumps parents' rights.

All you have to do, Mr. Speaker, is walk three blocks. I know you live not far from here. You have a lovely wife and a great family and you're a great dad, and you understand how important it is to take care of kids.

Parents should be supportive. I'm very proud. I've always said that the most important thing I've done in my life, more important than politics, is fathering my son Michael, who had such a struggle, who now has his own business, 17 employees and four trucks. For a street kid who came into the world with fetal alcohol syndrome and had trouble getting through a day, he's doing really, really well, and he's doing really, really well not just because of me but because of great people in the public service who were great social workers and great teachers and great mentors. It was beyond my ability to care for that child and make sure that Michael grew up to be the parent—he's getting married, by the way; I just found out that my son is getting married on January 17. His first wife died of cancer six months after they had their first child. This is a big day.

A lot of families we represent need the state. It's not the state; it's us as families caring for each other. It's us holding up children together. It's a cliché to say that a village raises a child, but I think the things we believe in over here and the actions that we've taken—and where we share some common values with the New Democrats in a lot of things is that we actually believe we have a collective responsibility for children's well-being.

1710

We can argue about who takes credit for what or whether an early childhood education program should be the lead, or universal child care, but we should both agree on this, because there are certain things—the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was talking about climate change earlier. I totally agree with her. That's something we should do like the Norwegians and the New Zealanders. We should simply say climate change is such a threat that we're going to make it a non-partisan issue, we're going to raise it up, and we're going to solve it together. Children are just too important, and the care and safety of children is just too important.

But what does the member for Nepean–Carleton say to people like me, my family? My mom, who is—I can't tell you what her birthdate is because she'll kill me, because she's probably watching. Hi, Mom. It's your birthday today, so happy birthday.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Don't reveal that detail.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I won't reveal that detail.

But my mom came into a Ukrainian family and couldn't have children, which was pretty tough for her, if you know the whole culture in the 1950s about what it was like to be a woman in a big Ukrainian family and be the only one of your sisters who found out you couldn't have children very easily—and she adopted me, and she's pretty remarkable, my mom. She had to make choices. She didn't come into the world with me. She's not a lesser mom because of that, and she needed the

state. She needed child and family services to be able to get a child and she needed support, and she turned out to be an awesome mom.

But this idea that somehow families and parents have rights—they don't. We lived in generations in the last 100 years where most women will tell you that sometimes the person they were most afraid of was the man that they were living with. You look at all the battered women's shelters—do you know how many kids live in care in my community? Is it because they were somehow dysfunctional or the state intervened? No, it's because so many kids aren't safe in the house that they were born in; so many women don't go home with a key to a safe place to live. The fact that the official opposition doesn't get that is shocking to me, in 2014. It really is shocking to me, especially after some of the stuff we've been reading about in the paper about violence and about denigrating women and about denigrating people, that you don't get that.

I'm hoping that someone in that party will stand up and say that the member for Nepean–Carleton wasn't representing the views of that party, because what I just saw was one of the most ridiculous and absurd speeches I have heard in this House. It denigrates the idea of families and of safety and just any sense of principle and humanity. To hear that kind of patriarchal stuff from a woman member of this House was quite shocking to me.

I will leave it to other members to continue, but thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm proud to stand here and add some more comments from this side of the House after my colleague from Nepean–Carleton, Lisa Macleod, and Oxford, the great Ernie Hardeman. I just want to bring up again that he got that carbon monoxide detector bill passed in this House after many, many years, and at the end of the day, he's making a difference, and that's what this bill needs to be doing about children as well.

I wasn't going to go here, Mr. Speaker, but I am going to start off a little bit that I believe what's missing from this debate is the debate on what constitutes quality child care. Frankly, we can stand and debate all day until we're blue in the face about the Quebec versus Ontario model of child care. But the question really is, what do the parents believe is the best care for their children?

I find it interesting that the member from Toronto Centre uses arrogance to tell us that the state can do better, that they know how to do child care better than parents. I'm going to take a pretty firm stand against him on that one. I am a parent and I am a proud parent, as most of the people in this room, most of the people listening are proud parents that do right by their children. They want to raise their children to the best of their ability. I think it's a bit sanctimonious for him to tell us that the state always does a better job than parents do, because I am so proud of my mother, who sadly passed away last year, but she couldn't have been a better

parent. She gave me the upbringing that I have, and I have been able to be proud and privileged to be in this House to represent the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

She didn't need the state to come in and tell her how to raise me; she didn't need the state to tell me how to do my job. I don't need that, and I certainly don't want to go down that road for my children. I struggle with any form of compulsion, to be told, "You shall do this." We live in a free and democratic society. We just celebrated Remembrance Day, those brave men and women who gave their lives so we could have the freedom, the right and the privilege to do what we want, to have free speech and to choose.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: "We balked socialism" is absolutely correct, as my good friend from Elgin–Middlesex–London just said. We need to be here to represent the ability for people to have choice, to have the choice that they wish, and we need to do so particularly when it comes to our children—those pages sitting in front of you, Mr. Speaker—the next generation of our great province. We need to have choice. We need to have the ability for people to have choice, and I say sincerely—and I'll support my colleague from Nepean–Carleton particularly—that parents are in the best position to choose what the best option is for their child. Anyone who says that, I think, should be answering to others about why they feel so strongly that the state should be coming in here.

I have two boys, Zach and Ben. Zach is 20 and in Fanshawe College right now. Ben is 17. We had the privilege, we were lucky, to be able to have help raising them because we both had to work. We didn't have the luxury—as some members, I think, stated in this House, they were able to take off work and stay at home. That's great for those people who can, but the bulk of the people, certainly in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, don't have that option, and Bill Walker certainly didn't, nor does he have that option, to not have two parents working in today's world.

We were fortunate to have a home care provider that was a very small independent operator who actually provided fabulous—in fact, they still send Christmas cards back and forth, my children to their child care provider, and I think it's the greatest thing that's happening.

We're going to lose 140 daycare spaces as a result of Bill 10—

Mr. Todd Smith: It's 140,000.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you—140,000. Where is that going to come from? In my riding, that's going to have a huge impact on those small, innovative, caring entrepreneurs who are providing virtually hour-by-hour care. More than just care; they become family. They actually treated my children like they were children of their own, and we want to ensure that that ability remains there. We can't allow a group or a motion to come out to make it sound good in the press without really knowing what the unintended consequences of that may be.

My boys were very fortunate. They were with other kids of a similar nature and similar upbringing, in a community, so they became good community friends. Again, they've kept in contact from that experience. An institution just doesn't have the ability in all cases to provide that same level of care, and I think we need to always be considerate of what that is. We need to understand what the benefits are.

Again, looking back at my children, my boys, and the choices that we were able to provide: We were able to put them into a home care situation so that when we left for work and we had to leave, we felt very comfortable and confident that they were going to get the best care possible, that they were going to be treated like an extension of that wonderful person's care. Joanne McCall was her name, and she's still a good, dear family friend. After a number of years she decided to move out of that, but I'll tell you, she had a lot of kids go through her system, through her home, and she provided excellent care. I've never heard a bad thing about it.

At the end of the day, being able to leave your children—I think someone the other day, Mr. Harris from Kitchener–Conestoga, said that he had to make a choice. He has two; Murphy and—what's his—

Mr. Todd Smith: Lincoln.

Mr. Bill Walker: Lincoln and Murphy. Again, Sarah is going to be going back to work very soon, so they're making that very challenging consideration of where they're going to leave their children every day. They're going with a small, independent operator that they know will give those family values, that caring one-to-one care that only they can.

They had institutional choices, I'm sure, at their disposal, and they've chosen—as I have and I think a number of my colleagues have—not to go that route.

Furthermore, in a rural municipality like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we don't have a lot of institutions at our disposal. We have these small independent operators. That's their way of contributing to their community, to their economy and to their livelihood. They actually operate businesses.

Again, back to Bill 10, my colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, is fighting to be able to have consultation out in the community, to actually have the people, the parents, have a choice in this very important debate. The Liberals have squashed that debate, for the most part. They've used tactics in this House to squash debate, to ramp up the debate and close it off. We're still going to continue to bring that fight for those people out there who truly do care and want to have abilities and options that they can discuss.

In rural Ontario, we don't have the luxury of having 15 of these in any municipality. If these get shut down, where do I take my kids? If I was going back 20 years, where would I have taken my children if there wasn't that institution? And can we afford that institutional setting that they are proposing will be the panacea to save all?

We cannot just sit here idly by—I certainly cannot—and argue that institutional child care is the best option

for every child, regardless of age, abilities, temperament, relationship to his or her parents, and socio-economic background.

Every child is different, Mr. Speaker, as we all know. You've got children, and I've had the pleasure of meeting them. They're wonderful children. I'm sure, like mine, they're different children. Both of my boys are chalk and cheese when it comes to certain things. They need different care; they need different approaches. You can't just put them into an institution and treat everybody like a widget. That's not what we're here to do. We're not creating engines on a machine line. These are children; they are our future. We need the ability to have what's best for that child, and each child, I believe, may need different things. All of us may choose different settings for each of our children as we go through the process. The whole idea is that you should have choice. You should have the ability to have those small independent operators that can provide that.

1720

We can't get caught up in the buzzwords and try to make this a political spin issue that we're going to get a couple of headlines in the paper with. This is about kids. This is about the future of our whole society, how we treat these children in their very earliest years. We need to do that so that we actually have them in the setting that's going to be best for them.

I'm going to repeat a number of times in this short little bit of time—I wish I had a couple of hours to debate. I could ask for unanimous consent to give me more—

Hon. Michael Coteau: We don't.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Coteau, that's not very nice. What about this openness? What about this partnership and accountability?

We have to be reasonable. Most times, when I speak in this House, what I try to find is balance. I want to look at both sides of an issue and say, what's really the best for—in this case my children, but all children? And in the larger context, what's best for Ontario as a province? What's best for our children in this case? We need to make sure that we look at any policy decision and truly understand what the ramifications are going to be, the positive and the negative. The unintended consequences of some of these decisions are going to stick with us for a long time.

We've certainly seen this in my three years here with this government and the decisions they're making. We're seeing the repercussions already. We can look at energy, and the windmills that they, again, have forced undemocratically on the people of Ontario, and what that has done to our energy rates and what it continues to do to the businesses and families in my riding who come to me every day talking about energy rates and how exorbitant they are; that they can't afford—getting back to the child care debate, with the energy rates as they are, we're probably not going to be able to afford child care in the future if we keep going with these energy rates, because most of our paycheques are going to be going just to pay the exorbitant costs that they're putting into that system.

There are parents who will argue that the money you're looking to spend on such a compulsory policy—and again, I don't believe in compulsion. And that's money Ontario does not have, I should add. Let's not forget: Every single child in Ontario is now born into \$21,000 of debt because of this Liberal government that in 11 short years have doubled our debt, and have more debt collectively than the rest of the provinces in Confederation. That's abhorrent. For the members on that side to get up and preach to us about how much they care about kids, how can they continue to spend us into oblivion? Putting debt upon debt upon debt—\$21,000 per child. That's horrible. It's unconscionable that they would continue that, and bring out another budget again this year for another \$12.5-billion deficit. Yet, at the same time—let's talk about the transparency and accountability act that they've just recently introduced—they say that they're actually going to balance that budget by 2017-18. I just don't have the Liberalomics to be able to add that all up and get the same equation.

Mr. Todd Smith: You have a different calculator.

Mr. Bill Walker: I definitely have a different calculator, one that actually works.

At the end of the day, what we should be doing in this child care act is making it mandatory that all children take math 101, and we'll make the Liberals take it right along with them, because they're not doing a great job with that math in the last 11 years.

We should be spending money to boost maternal and paternal leave or boost the child tax credit to help parents' economic independence, especially mothers. Those who truly need our help, that's where we should be focusing our process. We shouldn't be spending \$10.8 billion a year in interest payments to service the debt that that government has created; then we might have a lot more money to give back to those single moms who need some help or those single-parent families that need a hand up, not a hand out, to be able to help their children and ensure that they have proper daycare and food.

Anything that I've read—and I'm going to compare a little bit here because there seems to be a lot of noise being made about the Quebec child care centre regulation and model compared to Ontario's. There are a lot of differences between them, and I think I referenced earlier the chalk and cheese analogy. At the end of the day, they're saying that Quebec has a much better model. It's significantly subsidized. How can we do that and really ensure—what I want to do when I compare is look at ratios: For Ontario, the staff-to-child ratio for infants less than 18 months is 3-to-10; infants in Quebec, it's 1-to-5. It's just natural that we're going to, when we have that many more people working with our kids—which you want, one-on-one, as much as you can; you want that care based on people as much as you can and at the lowest ratio possible—it's going to be more costly to operate.

Food: Ontario requires centres to provide all meals and to post menus. Quebec does not require centres to provide any food to children in care. Again, it costs

money for food, particularly at the costs that this government has created for us to produce our food. Our farmers every day are telling me that it's becoming more and more costly for them to produce the products and services that we need because of the poor mismanagement policies and the waste, the billions of dollars that are boondoggled in things like gas plants, Ornge and eHealth. I don't really want to go off into those subjects, because we've talked about those almost every day I've been in this House. Sadly, it's billions of dollars that aren't going to the front line of our health care or our education sectors.

I'm currently the critic for community and social services and long-term care and wellness. It's just inexcusable that this government spends more on interest payments every year than they do on the whole social services sector. So if we really want to get down to the brass tacks of why this type of a bill is needing more debate, more thorough discussion, it's that if they weren't wasting so much money over there, there would be a lot more money for things like child care, like front-line education, like front-line health care services.

But I digress, and I know someone is going to stand on a point of order, probably, and tell me to get back to the topic.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Delaney's not here.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Delaney's not here. Correct.

Physical space is another one. Ontario requires bigger physical space for children to play. Ontario requires, by law, at least 2.5 hours of outdoor time, weather permitting, and about six square metres of space per child. Quebec does not, and in fact only requires four metres. Again, if we think of something such as the MaRS building just across the street here, Mr. Speaker—just think of that white elephant.

Interjection: We could have daycare there.

Mr. Bill Walker: We could have daycare there. They might at least fill a few spaces in that already empty building. By the way, they're spending \$450,000 a month just on interest payments to keep that white elephant afloat so that they don't have to actually admit to the taxpayers that, yet again, they have squandered and wasted very, very special tax dollars.

I just heard before I came down today that they're going to be cutting \$500 million out of the education budget. That's going to have a huge impact in places like rural Ontario, and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound in particular. I don't know how I'm even supposed to tell my constituents that they are going to do this and yet they are going to spend \$450,000 per month to keep a white elephant building going so that they save face. It's just like the gas plant boondoggle all over again. Just step up to the plate, admit that you don't know what you're doing and get out of it. We can't afford to continually go down this path, or we're not going to have any money left for daycare or for any other things that we're talking about.

Child care is among the most important concerns for parents seeking to contribute to the economic security of their families while juggling unpaid domestic respon-

sibilities. Intuition tells us that we don't want to necessarily have our children—we definitely don't want them in an institutional setting for 10 hours a day. It's a very heart-wrenching challenge for most parents who have to work, both parents, to go out and leave their children with someone else, but at the end of the day, the last thing we want is something that's institutional and they're just going to become part of that machinery. We're not a widget factory when we're talking about kids.

This is about our children, our most precious resource, the thing that certainly I and all of my colleagues, I believe, and hopefully all colleagues in this House, take as the most reverent responsibility that we have. We have to always put our children and their welfare ahead of anything else we do: their health, their welfare, their well-being. We need to put them on a firm footing from those very first days so that they're comfortable, they're confident, they're learning the social skills of interacting with other peers around them.

They need to be in a setting that, to me, is the most that we can assimilate to our natural home setting as possible. That means there needs to be choice. That means there needs to be a variety of different institutions that can actually provide care. Not the factory institution—I'm more meaning options of choice of facility, the ability to have single operators, small homes, grandmas, aunts, moms who are actually doing this, early childhood educators who are actually trained to do the specific type of training to ensure that our children get the exact care and options that we need. I definitely don't want institutional.

I'll be voting against this bill. We need to ensure that if it does go through, there are a number of amendments to ensure that children are the absolute first priority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's always a great day when I get the opportunity to speak on an opposition day motion.

It being 5:30, I know my lovely wife, Karan, is just finishing up her day as principal at St. Patrick's school in Peterborough, doing another great job with all the wonderful students there—great kids, great potential for the future. My son, Braden, a grade 11 student at Holy Cross in Peterborough, should be home, and our daughter, Shanae, a grade 10 student at St. Peter in Peterborough—I've got to give a plug. Shanae's basketball team, junior girls, St. Peter, won COSSA last Thursday. What a great team. They went undefeated.

1730

Now I've got to get back to the debate at hand here, having given my plug for Peterborough.

Mike Pearson, Canada's Prime Minister from 1963 to 1968—one of my great political heroes. What Mr. Pearson said was that there are times in society when you do things on a collective basis to enhance individual rights. When you look at the Pearson legacy, the Canada Pension Plan, the new Canadian flag, the Canada Assistance Plan, negotiating the national medicare agreement with all the provinces across Canada—examples of doing

things on a collective basis to enhance individual rights. This motion that we're talking about today is exactly that: doing something on a national basis, on a collective basis, to enhance individual opportunities within families.

My good friend Ken Dryden, one of the greatest goaltenders ever in the National Hockey League—a great team, the Montreal Canadiens—negotiated, in 2006, a national daycare program. He negotiated with provinces that were represented by Liberal governments, represented by NDP governments and represented by Conservative governments. Collectively, they put a plan in place to bring about a national daycare plan. Then, in 2007, when Mr. Harper came in, he cancelled the Canada-Ontario daycare agreement. Just like that, he ripped it up, got rid of it because it was a great program.

This motion today talks about looking again at a national daycare program, which I think is very important. It's something that my wonderful constituents in Peterborough take the opportunity to talk to me about—again, doing something on a collective basis to enhance individual opportunities, and this is what it is all about.

We know that in Quebec, through the equalization program that Ontario is a net contributor of some \$11 billion, they've taken those equalization dollars to provide daycare on a very cost-effective basis. Ontario, of course, right now doesn't have that advantage because we are net contributors to the equalization program of some \$11 billion.

But we have taken great strides over the last 11 years. We've had the great privilege of being the government of Ontario. In fact, our mandate was renewed on June 12, and it's great that we have some great new caucus members on this side, the kind of individuals who are very supportive of having quality daycare within their ridings—north, south, east and west.

I think that this motion that has been put forward by the leader of the third party is something that we certainly can support. As we move into the federal election next year, I'm pleased that the Leader of the Opposition in Ottawa, Mr. Mulcair, dusted off that Ken Dryden program and has now made that Dryden program the centrepiece of their election platform. It's always great when they take a great Liberal idea and use it as their own. As long as they footnote it in their election platform and put an asterisk there that it belonged to us, we'll be very happy about that.

We know that the province of Ontario will continue to invest in high-quality daycare, something that is very important to us all. I've had the opportunity, when I visit the rural part of my riding—40% of Peterborough riding is rural. When I'm in the great communities of Havelock, Norwood, Asphodel and Lakefield, I get the opportunity to see the quality daycare that is being provided in those great rural centres in my riding.

We've invested in full-day kindergarten, one of the great success stories of education in the world. Arne Duncan, Barack Obama's education secretary, has been in Ontario on at least five occasions to see the great

success of full-day kindergarten. He didn't go to British Columbia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island or Quebec. He came right here to the province of Ontario to look at full-day kindergarten, something that's been a renowned success story, to look at ways that he might be able to implement it in the school system in the United States. I think that's a great testament to what we're doing here in Ontario.

I want to thank the leader of the third party for bringing this forward. It's a timely debate, and I think we get the good sense of where this side stands on this opposition day motion, and I must say it's rather nice from time to time to join with our colleagues in the third party and support what I think is a well-thought-out, very responsible motion that they put forward here today.

I was getting worried in the spring of this year, Mr. Speaker, when they looked like Tories in a hurry, and now they've come back, after their convention on the weekend, being more moderate and responsive. I think this is a resolution that was drafted post-convention to bring them back into the political spectrum where they are closer to us and really showing the responsible way a third party can act in the province of Ontario.

I see that my time is up, so thank you so much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the minister.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Toronto—Danforth.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I am happy to have the support of my colleagues, but also pleased that we're debating this matter today. Child care is a pressing issue across this country, and yet so rarely is it on the political radar. I am very grateful to Tom Mulcair and the federal NDP for coming forward with a proposal for \$15-a-day child care.

Speaker, as you are well aware, there is an opportunity here for Ontario, in partnership with an NDP-led federal government, to make a huge difference to the families of Ontario, to set the foundation for a licensed, non-profit, publicly run daycare system that will change the lives of children, women and men across this country. The commitment to \$15-a-day child care is a game changer for everyone.

Let's look at what a large-scale affordable child care program has meant in the province of Quebec. A recent study done by the respected economist Pierre Fortin showed that affordable child care has allowed a significant increase in the number of women in the workforce. That is a tremendous accomplishment.

When I go door to door in my riding, I talk to new parents who come to the doors with babes in arms, with children, and talk about their difficulties in finding licensed, affordable child care. Many people, first-time parents, have an incredible anxiety, because they can hear the clock ticking on their maternity leave. They know that in 11 months, eight months, six months, they're going to be back at work, and they have been scouring the community, they have been scouring the city, for child care that's accessible to them and that's affordable.

Those who have found care are staggered by sticker shock: \$1,600 a month for infant care. For families with two children, and let's say you're paying \$1,300 for toddler care, we have situations where people are paying more for child care than they are on their mortgage. This puts an incredible pressure on these new families. They're hard-pressed, they're sleepless, they're in love with their baby, but they can't figure out how to balance their budget. They know they need two of them at work, and they're trying to figure out how they can afford to do that and pay for child care at the same time, because child care can amount to a very large percentage of a person's take-home pay.

What Quebec does, what Ontario could do, in partnership with a federal government led by the NDP, is to end that anxiety and give people a clear path forward for their lives; a path for women—who most often stay home with their children—to know they can have a child and that they can spend, if they want, the first half-year or year at home with that child and then go back to work, to fully use all their training, all their skills and know that that child will be looked after by people who are trained, in an environment that's safe and stimulating so that they can go to work and live their lives to their full potential and live to their full potential as a parent. That's the kind of change we could make. That's why it's important for every legislator in this House to vote in favour of this motion.

1740

But Speaker, it's not just that it opens the door to a new reality of life for women, for men and for parents; it's also a situation in which, because many women are allowed to go back into the workforce, tax revenue is generated that pays the cost of this program. In fact, the taxes that were generated by the women who went back into the workforce paid for everything that the provincial government put in and paid a bonus to the federal government, which didn't put in a nickel. Let the women and parents of this country go to work and get the support that they need for good-quality, affordable, safe, stimulating child care.

This initiative increases gross domestic product—I'll just throw that one in—it allows women to get back into the workforce, and it pays for itself. On that basis alone, without saying anything else, we should support this program; this motion should be passed.

But I have to say, there's another extraordinary benefit. Just to give you an example, Speaker: In my riding, WoodGreen Community Services runs a program called Homeward Bound. Every year, they take in dozens of young single moms, and they give them the support—with affordable housing and with child care—to go back to school so that these young women and their children can leave the world of having to live on ODSP or on welfare and support themselves through employment. And they like that. They like that sense of independence. They like to be able to support themselves. It's a wonderful program, and when I go door to door in the building where these families live and talk to the moms

and see how the kids are getting on, I think that this investment in these young people pays incredible dividends. I'm also always aware that this is helping dozens of people; maybe hundreds; maybe, over many years, thousands.

But there are tens of thousands trying to get by on social assistance. Their lives are very difficult, and I talk to them as well, as I go to their door.

In Quebec, affordable child care has had a dramatic impact on the number of people living on social assistance. Here's what Mr. Fortin's study found. From 1996 to 2008 in Quebec, "The number of single-parent families on Quebec welfare rolls (headed in the vast majority of cases by women) declined from 99,000 to 45,000"—more than cut in half. If you want a cost-effective anti-poverty program, if you want to put people back on their feet, if you want to allow people to regain control of their lives, there is little better you can do than this.

Note as well, Speaker, that their median real after-tax income shot up by 81%: not just off social assistance rolls, not in a situation where they were trying to live on a very meagre amount of money, but in a situation where their actual household income came up dramatically.

A program that increases gross domestic product, that allows women to get back into the workforce, that pays for itself and that, at the same time, is an effective anti-poverty program—we need that, Speaker. We need it in this province.

Let's look at the issues that we face here in Ontario. I would expect that our leader, Andrea Horwath, may well have touched on some of this earlier, but I want to go back. We face a lack of licensed non-profit and public child care spaces in this province. It's the simple reality. I'm dealing with this in committee hearings right now on Bill 10. Something like 20% of children are in licensed care. There is another chunk that are looked after at home by their moms, family or nannies. There's another chunk in unlicensed care.

This is a pressing problem. Too few spaces, unaffordable costs—I outlined them. Parents who have two or three children are paying in the many thousands to access that care and make sure their children are well looked after. Thousands of families are on the waiting list for fee subsidies, and their whole lives are organized around the need to get that subsidy. When you have that situation where you have incredibly high costs and you have a lack of subsidies, you generate illegal daycare operations. I'm not talking about informal daycare or household care provided by a caregiver who has two or three or four children; I'm talking about people who will pack 10 and 12 children in a house. But people are so desperate that they will, at times, choose to ignore what is before them. We make people desperate when we don't provide good-quality child care that they can afford.

We know that our child care workers are in a situation where their pay is inadequate; it is low. When I talk to people who run child care centres, they acknowledge their frustration that they don't have the money to pay people the way they should be paid. Beyond that, they

have to deal with turnover because people are constantly looking for work that will pay them a bit more. As much as they love early childhood education, as much as it's something that opens them up, that makes life more exciting and more worthwhile for them, they have to pay rent, and they have to put food on the table. So they look for other work. Turnover is a big problem, and this has been mentioned before.

We have all these problems and a reduction of funding by this provincial government in 18 communities in Ontario, which will be leading to the closure of child care centres. We have all these problems and a further reduction in funding, a further burdening of stress and anxiety on the shoulders of parents and child care workers. We can't stand by while people continue to struggle with these problems. I'm very pleased that the federal NDP has come forward with this position. I'm very pleased that we have put this position forward, that Ontario should be working in conjunction with the federal government—a new federal government.

I think that we have an opportunity to say very loudly to people across Canada that we in Ontario are ready to move forward on this, that we are ready to partner with the federal government, that we are ready to take on this big social issue.

Like health care, this is an issue that is fundamental to families.

There are some today who have argued that this is simply the responsibility of parents. I have to say to you, Speaker, that every person in society benefits from children being born into that society. You go into a seniors' home, and you see the people in their 20s and 30s and 40s who are maintaining that home, who are looking after those seniors, who are giving them medication, giving them assistance. Where do those children come from? We all benefit from the parents and the families that spend the time and spend the love to raise children because the simple reality of us as humans is that we age. As we age, we look to others to care for us. If the next generation is not there, if they haven't been well nourished, if they haven't been well loved and well educated, believe me, it is not a pleasant thing to get older, not pleasant at all.

We recognize that to raise a child you need a whole society. With this motion today, we're recognizing that society can't just do it on the cheap; that it has to invest in those children, invest in those families and invest in that generation. When it does that, it can solve a myriad of problems that we wrestle with every day. It can make society as a whole wealthier; it can make sure that every person, regardless of gender, is allowed to fully use their skills and potential; and it can make sure that we start addressing the issue of poverty that gnaws at the fabric of this society.

Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for debate has expired.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd ask the members to take their seats, please.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bisson, Gilles	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Campbell, Sarah	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Chan, Michael	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Yakubuski, John
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 67; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HOME CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Windsor West has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Min-

ister of Health and Long-Term Care. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I welcome the opportunity to readdress a question I asked in this chamber yesterday. I stood in this chamber and asked the Premier why, under her watch, health care services are being slashed in southwestern Ontario. The Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre, which services my riding of Windsor West, told its clients that they were cutting back on daily nursing visits by 33%. This abrupt and drastic slashing of services sent shock waves through my community. Yesterday, the minister denied this was even happening and stated that it just isn't true: "We are not making cuts to home care or to our community care services."

While the minister is in denial, my constituents are suffering from a dramatic reduction in services. The reduction in services is well documented, and I've heard first-hand from the CCAC that daily nursing visits will be cut by 33%. The CCAC claims that it will focus on servicing its core mandate and that there are other programs that can service clients with modest needs. The reality, however, is that my office is inundated by constituents with those so-called "low-mild" needs who had their home care services or the services available to a loved one cut off.

One constituent contacted my office concerned about their mother, who recently suffered from heart failure and COPD. Because of these conditions, what seem like mundane routines, like bathing, are actually a struggle and render her breathless. Requiring her to take responsibility for this routine is, in fact, a health concern.

Another person contacted my office because she was told that now it was her responsibility to administer her husband's medication intravenously. This is something the elderly woman is not comfortable with, and the CCAC was administering this treatment for years.

Finally, I've heard from an 89-year-old woman who is determined to remain in the house she has lived in for over 30 years. Unfortunately, she is unable to perform a number of tasks on her own and will be forced to leave and go to an assisted living facility. There are many more examples, and I regret that it is not possible to cover all of their stories in the allotted time.

1810

What does the minister have to say to these people when he denies that service cuts are actually taking place? We're told that they should expect other programs to cover these treatments, but no assessment of alternative program availability or funding level was performed.

The CCAC has increased its mandate over the years to the point where people rely on services to be available for moderate patient needs. I believe these people deserve to have these services and, that in performing these services for so long, the CCAC now has an obligation to provide them. To unilaterally slash services to our seniors and home care patients is truly unfortunate. It even represents poor economic planning, now that patients

may be kept in expensive hospital care longer because of the uncertainty of their level of home care.

I think what is most troubling about the CCAC slashing its services under this government's regime is that it reflects the larger trend we are seeing across southwestern Ontario since the Liberals took office. Most recently, Leamington hospital's obstetrics unit is on the chopping block. Luckily the community is banding together with local representatives and stakeholders to protect safe birthing options for mothers in the community. People across southwestern Ontario will not accept reduced treatment for our most vulnerable. We will not accept a government that is hollowing out our home care services, and we will certainly not accept a Premier and a minister who deny reality and state in this very chamber that these service cuts are not happening.

I will ask my question again: Will this government reverse each and every reduction to services at the CCAC?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Mr. John Fraser: I thank the member from Windsor West for her question and for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. Although I do not agree with the assertion of her question, I don't doubt the sincerity of it.

The fact is, in the last 10 years, we've doubled the spending on health care, from \$1.2 billion to \$2.4 billion. We've dramatically increased that. During that time, we've added an additional 226,000 people across Ontario who are now getting service, who weren't getting that service. That number, in 2003, was about 313,000; it's now 540,000. That's a 72% increase.

Specifically, the Erie St. Clair CCAC has received an increase of over \$60 million during that period of time, from \$72 million to \$132 million. This year alone, we're investing more than \$270 million across Ontario in community care, and we're getting results. We're measuring those things. Ninety per cent of people get their nursing visit within the first five days, and 50% of those people with complex needs get their nursing visit within a day. Additionally, about 84% get a visit from a personal support worker within five days.

Now, there is always more work to be done. CCACs are big, complex organizations. They serve thousands of people in thousands of places. I know, as the member has been getting calls—I think all members get calls from time to time in their office with regard to CCACs and people's needs. We often advocate on their behalf. I know that our CCAC where I come from, Champlain CCAC in Ottawa, has a process of appeals, and also our office has a very good contact at the CCAC that can call and assist people with the questions that they have.

As the member opposite would know, we're also increasing the salaries for personal support workers, some of whom have been traditionally the lowest paid in the health care system, and they're actually the people that provide the care for the people who we love and who we care for most. We've also given an additional three

million hours for personal support workers so that seniors can have more home care at home.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are investing more in home care. I know that the minister had, last year, struck a committee led by Gail Donner, who announced a six-member expert group looking into our home and community care programs. The group is looking at service variability, price and investment variability and innovation, and new approaches to care. The people that are on that committee as well are: Joe McReynolds, who's a former LHIN chair; Cathy Fooks, CEO of The Change Foundation; Dr. Kevin Smith, who's the CEO at St. Joseph's Health System; Dr. Samir Sinha—who you may also know provided a report for us on community care—who is at Mount Sinai and is the ministry adviser on seniors; and also Donna Thomson, who is a disability activist.

Again, I thank the member very much for her question and look forward to her response.

FOREST INDUSTRY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Kenora-Rainy River has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister may reply for up to five minutes as well.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm going to keep my comments this evening brief, as I intend to simplify the issue and the call to action.

Earlier today, I asked the minister if he would act now to ensure that the mill assets are preserved over the winter months so that we are not closing the door to the future operation of the Fort Frances mill. In his response, the minister replied that even before the deal fell through, even before questions were being asked in this House, he was investigating to "see what was possible" but that he still didn't have anything to announce today as he is still "investigating the possibility to see what we might be able to do."

Throughout many days of repeated questions and suggested solutions, the minister has been reluctant to come to the table and offer any solutions of his own. He has, however, come up with a lot of excuses and laid a lot of blame—at the NDP, at me personally, at the district and their specific requests. We've heard him repeatedly say that "The tenure system that is in place today is one that was created by the NDP in 1994"—I suppose suggesting that this mess is the fault of the NDP.

Sure, we put forward legislation 20 years ago, but it has been changed six times since its original adoption, including in 2011 when this government introduced and passed the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act. What the minister is not mentioning is that MNR ministers have always held to the principle that forest tenure was tied to local jobs. It has been successive Liberal ministers who have turned their backs on this fundamental principle of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. This

minister should stop pretending his hands are tied. In fact, the minister is altogether dismissing the very important role he has to play in the future success of this operation.

Upon review of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the sustainable forestry licence for the area and in speaking with key players in the forest industry, we are repeatedly faced with the fact that all indicate that the power rests with the minister—that it is up to this minister to use his discretion and do the right thing to ensure a bright and prosperous future for the Fort Frances mill and the Rainy River district.

I want to make the actionable requests clear for the minister:

(1) We need a change to the wood allocation so that it is tied to the success of the mill. This is not something that is new or that has never been done before. To reiterate, there is a provision in the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that allows the minister to use his discretion and make changes to the licence that will benefit the local community. He can exercise this right by going to the Lieutenant Governor.

(2) We need this government to come up with money to heat the mill this winter to ensure that the assets are protected while a business-to-business deal can be brokered.

(3) We need this government to behave in a manner that is consistent with other new business recruitment: talk with the potential buyer, express how much Ontario values their business and do what we can to reduce the stumbling blocks and ensure that this deal is a success. There is no guarantee that Expera will come back to the table, but if not Expera, we will pursue another buyer that will see the value of the Fort Frances mill.

One final point: I take issue with the comments made by the minister this morning suggesting that I am wrong to offer hope to my constituents. There has been a steady flow of letters coming into my offices, and there are hundreds of names now on petitions by residents as well as mayors, reeves and chiefs of communities across the Rainy River district. NOMA, Unifor, ENGAGE Young Professionals Network and the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce have all come out in support of a strong future for the Fort Frances mill. The media in northern Ontario, Toronto and across the country have been watching and writing news articles about this issue. Last week, people from across the Rainy River district took to the streets to march for action. Why? Because we are confident that a positive solution can be brokered if this government wants to see it happen.

1820

We all know that there is plenty of wood, a useful mill and interested investors. It's a lack of appropriate wood rights that are controlled by this minister's office and the delay in the willingness to make this deal happen that are the real stumbling blocks. Time is running out. We are in our hour of need. Will this government commit to action and more than just talking? If so, will this minister ensure that the wood rights are allocated to the mill, that the mill

is heated this winter and that companies can feel confident investing in northern Ontario?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister, you have up to five minutes to reply.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I think I'll begin with perhaps just a little bit of history. The importance of large employers in small communities, which is what we are talking about here today—and this particular mill in Fort Frances was Boise, it was Abitibi, it is Resolute, and I'm not sure who it was before Boise, and has been in that community for 100 years. The importance of an employer, an economic driver like that in a small community, is obviously not for one second lost on me or on our government. In fact, in 2005, when the transition in the forest industry began, I would argue that in my home community of Thunder Bay and in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan—perhaps no area of the province was as egregiously affected by that transition as was my home community of Thunder Bay and my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan. We lost more than one large pulp and paper mill and we lost more than one or two sawmills in the riding. I very much understand the importance of these economic drivers, even in a larger community like Thunder Bay but especially so in smaller communities like Fort Frances. We get it.

To suggest that what I've been doing to this point in this discussion is to be putting forward excuses is language that obviously I don't agree with. What the member opposite and party opposite refuse to acknowledge is that this is, at the end of the day, a privately owned facility. Resolute Forest Products owns this mill. It's not in bankruptcy. It is very much a going concern. They are a company that's still investing in the province of Ontario, and they are a company that is creating a great deal of employment still in the province of Ontario.

In the member's five minutes tonight, she spoke about the tenure modernization process. Before I go on, I want to read you a quote. This is from a few years ago. It says:

"You're" fooling "around with the licences of forestry companies, and you can ill afford to do so. If I, as a company, go out in order to finance myself for modernization in my mill or any kind of an investment I need to do for expansion, I've got to be able to show that I've got the ability to secure the money that I'm borrowing. How do you do that? Yes, it's by the assets that you have and, yes, it's by your balance sheet, but it's also by being able to prove you've got trees to put in the mill. You're putting those licences at risk."

That was a quote attributed to the member from Timmins—James Bay, a member of the NDP, the third party. They then went forward, after speaking against the

tenure modernization that we brought forward, and voted against the tenure modernization that we brought forward, and yet they're able to stand in the House and, to the people of Fort Frances, pretend that the system they thought was no good—hold that out as an olive branch to them to say that with the stroke of a pen somehow this would have solved everything. They thought it was a bad system, but today they want it to be extended to the town of Fort Frances.

I've said in this House numerous times that even if the eSFL process had begun, even if this particular forest, the Crossroute Forest, was identified as one of the four priority areas that are under way in the province of Ontario for discussion on tenure modernization, in my opinion it would not have guaranteed anything. None of those four eSFL processes that are the priority of the province right now are concluded. I've talked to people on the ground who are in those negotiations and I can tell you, they're finding the process very difficult. They have multiple stakeholders. If, as the third party has said, we would have, with the stroke of a pen, decided that an eSFL was going to be created there, it wouldn't have happened yesterday.

Even if it had, it wouldn't have solved the problem, Speaker. I can tell you that the people who are involved in the ministry, the people involved in the forest management, would not have wanted us to do that. All the loggers with the licences, all the multiple municipalities—and not just Fort Frances; all of the forestry companies would have wanted to have had input into the structure of that eSFL. They would not have wanted us to do that. Yet the very thing that they spoke against and voted against, they hold out to the people of Fort Frances as being a silver bullet to solve this problem.

On the point, I have said in this House numerous times that before this business-to-business deal fell apart, which is what this is, I had begun to contemplate what would happen if Expera and Resolute could not find a solution to this issue. Yes, we had begun the process of thinking about what we could do to help contain that asset, to maintain that asset and see what would be possible on a go-forward basis. We started that process.

It's a privately owned facility. We obviously need their support and engagement on that file, and we're working to try to achieve some positive end in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1826.

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Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
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Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
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Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
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Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
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Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
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Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 19 November 2014

Mercredi 19 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House on November 18, Ms. Matthews has moved second reading of Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Since there are five people standing, this will be deferred until after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 17, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for London-Fanshawe has eight minutes left on her docket.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am pleased to rise today to share my thoughts and the thoughts of my caucus on Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act.

This bill, as I understand it, enacts the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, which bans payment, reimbursement and compensation for blood and plasma in Ontario. Further, this bill seeks to implement only one recommendation from the Thiessen review into the chemotherapy system by authorizing the Ontario College of Pharmacists to inspect and license hospital pharmacies.

While there is much good in this bill, I don't believe that it goes far enough, and my colleagues and I will seek to strengthen it in committee for the benefit of all Ontarians.

In its current state, our health care system has been shown to have dangerous loopholes that could allow for private, for-profit plasma clinics to pay blood donors. We have inadequate oversight in our hospital pharmacies and group purchasing organizations.

For me, this bill is personal, and it is personal for all Ontarians who have been waiting for this government to respond to the Thiessen review since the underdosing of more than 1,200 patients at four hospitals in Ontario and one in New Brunswick in 2013. Of those 1,200 patients, 691 cancer patients in my hometown of London received watered-down chemotherapy treatments, and of those, 40 were children. Further, more than 130 Ontarians lost their lives during this underdosing tragedy.

The most frustrating part of this tragedy is that it was entirely preventable. We all watched in shock as federal and provincial health officials scrambled to address the startling lack of oversight in the increasing practice of Ontario hospitals to outsource their pharmacy work.

For example, at the time of the tragedy, the Minister of Health claimed to the London Free Press that she was only made aware of this on March 30, 2013. However, the president of the London Health Sciences Centre said he was made aware of the underdosing on March 22,

2013. The health minister was also unable to answer questions about who should be responsible for the oversight of drugs that are brought into Ontario hospitals.

Finally, it was uncovered that the outsourcing of drugs to Ontario's hospitals had been happening for more than five years, with no one in charge of quality control or regulation. It was my NDP colleague from Nickel Belt who held the Premier's and the Minister of Health's feet to the fire by demanding they take action and implement oversight. This is the same lack of oversight that brought us the Ornge air ambulance scandal, which saw Ontario's public purse robbed of over a billion dollars.

Time and time again, this government has been caught entirely unaware of operations within its own ministries. This, compounded by the Liberal government's haste to outsource and privatize our vital public services, makes for a nasty recipe for failure.

My concern now, and the concern of those in my riding of London-Fanshawe, is how to restore public trust in our health care system, a system that continues to be plagued by lack of oversight and appalling gaps in its regulatory framework. Further, it also acknowledges that there is a glaring lack of transparency and oversight in group purchasing organizations. I do believe that this bill is a start in the right direction, but so much more is needed.

For example, regulation of hospital pharmacies, recommended by the Thiessen report, is a good start. However, this oversight would not have prevented the diluted chemotherapy drug tragedy from taking place. This offers little solace to the families in London who are still waiting for answers and assurances that they can trust our public health care system.

I also want to spend some time addressing how this bill seeks to amend sections of the Regulated Health Professions Act. Since introducing this bill, the minister has been forced by New Democrats to agree to review the entire Regulated Health Professions Act.

This fall, it was revealed that 20 patients were infected during infection outbreaks at private clinics in Toronto, but the public was never told. It was also revealed that professional regulators are under no obligation to report to the authorities those individuals who are disciplined for professional misconduct and who may have committed a crime.

Initially, the Minister of Health refused to acknowledge that these were problems, saying that the colleges already had the tools they needed. However, two weeks later, he did a complete U-turn and ordered the Ministry of Health to help figure out how to review the Regulated Health Professions Act.

That's what is also concerning. As I mentioned, this minister is unaware of many of the loopholes or lack of oversight in departments, and health care is one of those ministries we cannot take for granted. We need to make sure there are systems in place so that people's health isn't compromised.

0910

After the infections in the private clinics were made public, the minister at that point, two weeks later, did a

complete U-turn and ordered the Ministry of Health to help figure out how to review the Regulated Health Professions Act. We have to thank my NDP colleague from Nickel Belt. She has held this government to account and has been clear that it's time for mandatory reporting to authorities and mandatory sanctions with respect to individuals who commit crimes, in order to better protect the public.

We are also calling for an open public review of the act by a legislative committee in order to gather important input from health care professionals, colleges and the public about the best way to amend this act. This review cannot be done in secret and cannot be done behind closed doors.

The need for appropriate and effective reporting is vital. We have seen, time and time again, how reporting alone does not ensure protections for Ontarians. For example, in my hometown of London last week, there was a fatal fire in a group home for those suffering from mental health issues and addictions. This group home had been known to the provincial guardians, emergency services and several other community groups and organizations, yet in spite of the knowledge and the reporting efforts, this tragedy ensued.

Reporting issues is an important step, but ensuring those reporting mechanisms have the teeth necessary to truly protect the public is a vital component that we are currently lacking. This is why my NDP colleagues and I will not stop holding this government to account in this Legislative Assembly, and making sure that the voices of our constituents are heard with regard to health care, affordability, jobs, and accountability, and holding this government to account for many of the things in which they have let this province down.

As I said, this bill is a small part in the right direction, but there's still a lot more work that this Liberal government can do to actually be fully transparent. I know that we talk about transparency and accountabilities, and those are words we're throwing around, but there's actually meaning to those words for the people of our ridings. They actually believe, when we say "transparency and accountability," that it is transparent and this government will be held accountable.

When we bring legislation forward, let's just not make it so that it's a watered-down kind of meaningless piece of paper. Let's make it legislation that actually has an effect and delivers the result to the constituents that we represent.

Accountability and transparency: Our constituents deserve that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to rise this morning to respond to the member from London-Fanshawe.

I may be very blunt about this particular comment, Mr. Speaker, that the proposed Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, if passed, will be dealing with two very important issues. It is a time-sensitive bill that was previously introduced by then-Minister of Health Deb Matthews on the order paper in May 2014.

Schedule 1 of Bill 21 talks about prohibiting payment or the accepting of payment for blood and plasma donations in Ontario. Schedule 2 of the bill focuses on the regulation of hospital pharmacies in response to Dr. Jake Thiessen's review on the Ontario cancer drug supplies.

Let's all remember, folks, that Dr. Thiessen did the review over a year ago—August 7, 2013—encouraging and asking this province, and all of us here at the Legislature, to do some things with respect to protecting the health, and especially cancer treatment, for all Ontarians.

As much as I want to hear the debates here—I do totally agree that there's always room for improvement on this proposed legislation, but at the end of the day, we need to get this bill to committee to have more conversation with the people.

We also have to be mindful that right now, as we speak, Canadian Plasma Resources, a private, for-profit company, has already established two clinics here in Toronto and is paying \$25 per visit for plasma donors, up to a maximum of \$100 per month per person, and there is anticipation that a third clinic will be created in Hamilton.

At the end of the day, what are we doing? We need to protect all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to rise and comment on the talk by the member from London—Fanshawe.

As we've seen in the past few weeks—and it's certainly a concern we have as a caucus—legislation is being rammed through. It does get to committee, but this government shows a reluctance to let us travel in the province and talk about these things with stakeholders.

The member from London—Fanshawe raises some good points. This piece of legislation certainly should be thought through very carefully, because it affects our health. Some of us—we hope not many of us—may have to use some of these products in the future. We have seen in the past what can happen when proper oversight and proper rules and regulations aren't put in place. However, this government seems to be bound and bent on ramming through legislation and not allowing, to our mind, proper consultation with stakeholders in this business and certainly in others.

We believe this needs to be fully debated and fully talked about, too, with those involved in the plasma business and certainly in the blood services of Ontario. But I'm sure this is what's going to happen: It's going to be sent to committee, and any amendments that the parties on this side of the House have probably won't be looked at, and all of a sudden it will be rammed through without any travel time to talk to these different parts of the health industry. I think that's wrong and certainly something that we, as a party, feel we need to impress upon those in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to say, first of all, thank you to my colleague from London—Fanshawe for her re-

marks on this bill. I want to make it clear that we certainly support this bill. We support both components. We think it's important that we protect the institution of voluntary blood donation in Ontario. That is something that we're proud of, and we need to support that. We also acknowledge that there was a significant lapse in health care that deeply impacted many folks in southwestern Ontario; in fact, folks across Ontario, but particularly in southwestern Ontario.

It's important for us to address this issue by ensuring that we have proper oversight mechanisms that will ensure that drug dosages remain at the appropriate level to address whatever illness people in Ontario are facing. In this particular case, the recommendations from the Thiessen report—at least some of them—are being implemented, and I think that's a step forward.

But again, if we look at what my colleague was speaking about, there's a broader picture here. Accountability can't be done in a stopgap-measure type of approach. We see that there is a systemic problem with oversight when it comes to this government. Having one piece of legislation address one issue of oversight, one by one, isn't a fulsome solution.

We've asked this government to consider expanding the powers of the Ontario Ombudsman so that the Ombudsman, as an independent watchdog, an independent source of accountability, can oversee the entire health sector. That would be a real step toward systemically changing the problem, instead of having a bill that is raised each time one issue is found. That's not really creating a systemic change; it's not creating a fulsome solution. We ask this government to consider a real, fulsome solution in the health sector.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And women's services as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm sorry—and women's services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you. Good morning, Speaker.

As I understand it, this bill, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, actually combines two bills that were previously introduced but didn't pass. I'm glad to hear that the NDP is supporting it, but they're the ones who didn't support our budget, so we had an election and here we are.

Interjections.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Well, it's a reality. That's the reality. So we're back at it.

Hon. Brad Duguid: She wasn't being mean; she was just stating the facts.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: No, these are the facts. I just want to make it clear for the record why we're back on this.

It's a very important bill, because it would protect our current model of voluntary donation for blood and plasma. I don't think Ontario wants to go down the road of

something that's not voluntary. I think there are risks associated with that model. For example, paying people for blood donations raises a host of issues in communities, and it really flies in the face of the principles of a voluntary system. Paying for plasma is just a whole other world. I think it's very inconsistent with our values as Ontarians and what we want for our health care system.

0920

Support—of course we always look at what the experts are saying on this. People have talked about Dr. Thiessen's review, but there are others, of course, such as Dr. Graham Sher, who is the CEO of Canadian Blood Services. He said, "Canadian Blood Services has successfully managed the blood and blood products supply for Ontarians for more than 15 years. We are confident in the safety and sustainability of the current blood and blood product system in Canada, and we recognize Ontario's role in preserving voluntary blood and plasma donation in this province." The list goes on and on of people who support this, including people who have been blood-tainted victims and have experienced negative impacts—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

I'd like to remind the minister that it's women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Women's issues; thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I just want to correct you. Thank you very much.

The member from London—Fanshawe has two minutes.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt, the member for Perth—Wellington, the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton and the Minister of Children and Youth Services and minister responsible for women's issues.

The member from Scarborough—Agincourt talked about that there are pieces in place in this legislation that are going to help oversight. We didn't disagree with that. There is the one schedule, on blood donations, that absolutely is going to be helpful, and then schedule 2 with regard to underdosing of chemotherapy drugs and the oversight of pharmacies. So there is some of that.

What they neglected to mention—the minister also talked about why this bill hadn't passed because of the budget reasons and all that. She seems to forget, though, that the Minister of Health originally knew that this clinic was starting up their operations back in November 2012, with regard to blood donor services. So this is not something that you can say was—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Snuck up on you.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, exactly: snuck up on you. You had time to plan and get this bill to the House long before—you had mentioned May 2014.

The bottom line is, we're here to serve the public and we're here to make sure the oversight in health care is actually deliverable, with transparency and accountability. As the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton mentioned, we've been pushing for Ombudsman oversight. So if this government is truly dedicated to oversight and transpar-

ency, perhaps they should support the call to have Ombudsman oversight over the health care system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and add to the debate on Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. Bill 21 deals with two important and topical areas of our health care system. Firstly, the bill deals with the structure and rules around blood and plasma donation. Secondly, the bill deals with pharmacies and the oversight of the pharmaceutical industry in the wake of the recent chemotherapy drugs underdosing scandal.

Ensuring that our blood and plasma system is safe and ready to respond to growing demand is an incredibly important responsibility of any government. In the early 1980s, roughly 2,000 Canadians were infected with HIV-tainted blood products. Many, many more, perhaps as many as 30,000 people, were infected with hepatitis C. In response, the royal Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada, better known as the Krever inquiry, was created in 1993. Billions of dollars in compensation was received by victims from various governments, the Red Cross and insurance companies. In the aftermath of the scandal, Red Cross control of the national blood program was actually taken away and replaced with a new federal agency, Canadian Blood Services.

Plasma itself so important to our overall health care system because of the variety of ways it can be used. It is often used in pharmaceutical products that help combat Alzheimer's and hemophilia, for example.

Schedule 1 of this bill, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, came about as a response to clinics opening up that are trying to pay for plasma donations. There are currently no private clinics that pay for blood plasma in my riding of Chatham—Kent—Essex, so many of my constituents may not be aware of this issue, but it is a vitally important one.

Some background for folks at home: Earlier this year, former health minister Deb Matthews vowed that the government would shut down any clinics that would pay people to donate plasma. This was in reaction to negative media coverage of the announcement that Canadian Plasma Services, a private company, intended to compensate people with \$25 per donation. Clinics were planned for Toronto and Hamilton.

Canadian Plasma Resources in fact applied to Health Canada back in November 2012 for a licence to collect plasma from paid donors. One wonders why the government waited until news articles were written and complaints started coming in to address the problem. Canadian Plasma Resources has set up locations close to low-income areas. They were in fact set up near homeless shelters and drug treatment rehab centres, two in Toronto and one in Hamilton.

Critics of paid plasma donations argue that opening collection centres in Ontario will do nothing to increase plasma protein products here because these products will simply be sold on the international market. When it comes

to blood and plasma, it is perhaps more a matter of ethics than simply supply and demand of a commodity.

A Toronto Star editorial on the matter stated, "People who voluntarily give the gift of blood—motivated by altruism instead of financial reward—present a safer source than those who are down-and-out and reduced to selling their bodily fluids." Again, that was a quote from the Toronto Star editorial.

What happens if safe, voluntarily given donations do not meet the demand for blood? Seventy per cent of plasma used in Ontario comes from United States plasma clinics, from paid and unpaid donors. The rest of Ontario's plasma is donated right here in the province, based on a volunteer system. The tainted blood scandal of the 1980s saw the importance of plasma collected from high-risk prison populations of the United States during the beginning of the AIDS epidemic; however, the screening techniques of the day were woefully inadequate compared to the practices in place at Canadian Blood Services.

The fact of the matter is that Ontario does not receive enough voluntary donations of plasma to rely on donations alone. That sends a bit of a mixed signal about whether or not we should be using plasma from paid donors, but the simple reality is the province has to resort to purchasing plasma from other jurisdictions because we cannot keep up with the demand with locally donated blood. This is an issue that impacts governments of all political stripes. It could be a Liberal minister, a PC minister or even an NDP Minister of Health, but at the end of the day whoever is in that position in the event of a shortage will be chiefly concerned with (1) do we have enough blood or plasma to get through the shortage or emergency; and (2)—and vitally important—is it safe? I know as a parent and grandparent that if any of my family needed blood, my first question would not be whether the person who donated it was paid; I would simply hope that there was an available match.

What we absolutely do not want to see are people who are down and out on their luck being preyed upon in potentially unsafe places to sell their plasma or their blood. Many people in my riding believe that it is a sacred gift to give and not something to sell for any monetary gain.

Bill 21 does provide an exception that allows Canadian Blood Services to pay for blood or blood products in an emergency situation. This only makes sense, as we certainly would not want to tie the hands of Canadian Blood Services in the event that there is an emergency of massive shortage in the future. The government has made it perfectly clear that Ontarians will not be paid to donate plasma. They have drawn a very clear line on this matter.

0930

The bill imposes steep penalties on those who contravene any section of the Voluntary Blood Donations Act. A fine of no more than \$25,000 each day and/or imprisonment for a term of not more than 12 months can be handed out for a first offence. Repeat offenders can be fined up to \$50,000 each day and/or imprisoned for a

term of no more than 12 months. This is a clear signal to companies and individuals that paying for plasma donations will not be accepted in the province of Ontario.

But whether or not we pay for donations, we need to ensure that supply continues to meet demand going forward. How do we ensure that there will always be enough blood and plasma donations in the times when we need it? Well, this is certainly an incredibly complex question and one that has been a concern to different levels of government of all political stripes. As we saw with the recent Ebola scare, it is incredibly important to have a protocol in place in the event of an emergency outbreak or shortage. We cannot afford to be caught off guard by future blood or plasma shortages.

This is why we feel that it is so important that this bill see plenty of time in committee. We want to make sure that there is extensive discussion on this issue, as it is so important to the health of Ontarians now and in the future.

I believe that one of the most effective tools for promoting blood donation is education. Speaker, Ontarians need to be aware of the intense need for donors.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): A point of order on your own member. Go ahead.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't believe we have a quorum in the House today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Madam Clerk?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Apparently, a quorum is present. Thank you for that interlude.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh, sorry. On a point of order, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Now that my colleague has been interrupted, I thought I could just jump in quickly. I'd like to correct my record from yesterday. During my question, it was recorded that I had said a 50% reduction in auto insurance. It was 15%.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member, I guess at all times, is allowed to correct his own record. Thank you very much.

Continue. Sorry, member.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Canadian Blood Services is always looking for more blood and plasma donors. I'd like to take a moment to share some useful information for people who have considered donating but were unsure of the process.

A plasma donation appointment takes about an hour and a half. Plasma donation itself only takes approximately 35 to 45 minutes to complete, but just like with a blood donation, you have to be monitored for a few minutes before you head home.

If you only donate plasma, you are able to make a donation weekly. Once you start donating plasma, you can continue to donate blood as well, but you must wait

56 days after a plasma donation to donate blood. Canadian Blood Services suggests staying committed to one or the other so that you can donate more often.

There are many locations throughout my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex where blood clinics are set up with donation dates coming up throughout the coming weeks and months. Those looking to donate in Chatham–Kent can head to the Spirit and Life Centre on Wellington Street, the Chatham Polish Canadian Club on Inshes Avenue or even the St. Clair College healthplex.

Blenheim residents can stop by St. Mary's Hall on December 9 from 2:30 to 7:30 p.m. if they wish to donate. Ridgeway District secondary school and the University of Guelph Ridgeway Campus are holding donation days over the coming months, as is the F.T. Sherk centre in Leamington.

So here's what I want to do: I want to encourage you to visit the Canadian Blood Services website at www.blood.ca—it's real simple—for more information, including clinics near you and donation dates. There are plenty of opportunities and locations for people from the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex to give the gift of life, and I fully encourage them to do so.

I'll now turn my attention to schedule 2 of the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, which mandates the College of Pharmacists to inspect and license all hospital pharmacies in Ontario.

This part of the bill is in response to the underdosing of 1,202 chemo patients back in 2012 and 2013. A number of gaps were discovered in the drug purchasing and manufacturing process right here in Ontario in the wake of this chemo drug scandal. Understandably, it shook Ontarians' belief in our health care system.

After 1,202 patients in Ontario and New Brunswick were given diluted chemotherapy drugs in the spring of 2013, Dr. Jake Thiessen of the University of Waterloo was asked to conduct a review of Ontario's health care institutions to find out what went wrong and how we can avoid it in the future. Dr. Thiessen made 12 recommendations in his thorough review. A legislative committee was then established to report on the matter and made recommendations consistent with those found in the Thiessen report.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy tabled a report earlier this year recommending that the entire drug manufacturing system and processing process be subjected to far greater public scrutiny. When it comes to Ontario's health care system and especially its drug supply system, oversight and transparency are critical. Why do Ontarians have to wait for a scandal to bring these problems to light to receive an honest and transparent look into systems that have such a profound impact on their lives? When it comes to an issue as important as health care, shouldn't open government be the default?

Bill 21 is a positive bill. It seeks to address a very significant issue that has caused a lot of damage, both emotional and physical, to the people in this province. But it is, in essence, a reactive bill. The people of this province would prefer to see this government be proactive when it comes to safeguarding their health.

Bill 21 seeks to redefine hospital and community pharmacies so that they are all considered as one type of pharmacy in terms of inspection. This comes directly from the Thiessen report, as it was recommended that the Ontario College of Pharmacists license all pharmacies operating within the province's clinics or hospitals.

From the report: "This step of standardizing the pharmacy operations and practices brings the greatest potential patient benefits and reduces some of the identified medication management risks. It also implies that the previous recommendations targeted at licensed community pharmacies need to be adopted for clinic and hospital pharmacies." This will ensure that all institutions are properly inspected, and it is something that I fully support.

Bill 21, in general, provides the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with additional oversight. But as we have seen over the past few years with the eHealth and Ornge air ambulance scandals, there is a major difference between a Ministry of Health simply having the ability to oversee and a minister who is actually conducting effective oversight. I hope that the additional powers that this bill will give the minister are used effectively and not just added to the tool kit, never to be used.

Many of my colleagues have stated during debate on this bill that they want to see a meaningful consultation period in committee where all relevant stakeholders can, in fact, raise their concerns.

The government has its majority for four years. This bill will surely pass. There is no need to rush this bill along for the political victory that comes with passing legislation. In the end, Ontarians don't care as much about how quickly laws are passed as they do about the quality of the legislation. I might add that there is a balance in there.

As I have stated throughout my remarks, I really feel this is a good bill overall, and one that makes meaningful improvements to the safeguarding of Ontario's health care sector. But at the same time, I want to ensure that this bill will not have any unintended consequences once it's passed.

0940

I'm not a doctor and I'm not a pharmacist. I don't work on the front lines day in and day out. I can say that this bill is a positive, but I cannot vouch for it with the same authority as the men and women who are working in our health care sector each and every day.

Speaker, I am happy to support this bill at second reading, but let's get plenty of expert support of this bill at committee. Let's strengthen the bill to make it the best that it can be. When it comes to the health of Ontarians, we can do nothing less.

In addition to placing safeguards on health care, and especially on the health care system that impacts each and every person in the province, this bill gives us the opportunity to discuss and promote the incredibly important issue of blood and plasma donation.

I conclude by saying thank you to everyone listening at home who has donated blood or plasma. Your gift means more than you'll ever know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. I thought you had totally forgotten me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I can never forget you.

Mr. John Vanthof: The Speaker bought me breakfast a few days ago, and I haven't returned the favour yet, so he's still waiting for that.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: He's a nice guy.

Mr. John Vanthof: The Speaker is a very nice guy when he's off the chair.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: It is.

It's always an honour to stand in this House and to comment on the member's comments. They were very thoughtful, and I agreed with the vast majority of them.

It's not just about people's health; it's about people's faith in the system. If there's one thing that should be under the government's control, it's the protection of the integrity of the system. That integrity was broken, and it perhaps cost some people their lives, with the dilution of the chemotherapy drugs. We'll never know or be able to say that, but one of the things that this bill is trying to address is to ensure that that never happens again. Do we believe that it's perfect? No. Do we believe that it could be made better? Yes. It's our sincere hope that we do—on this side of the House, in this corner, we support this bill. We hope that the government takes the time to actually look at amendments to make this bill better, because this one shouldn't be about politics at all. In our opinion, the scandal isn't what happened; the scandal would be if there was political interference in trying to make sure it didn't happen again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to a very important issue. The legislation is important, but I first want to start by acknowledging the comments by the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. I absolutely agree with him when he talks about the donation of blood as a sacred gift and one that is not to be bought or sold—and to reiterate his thanks to those donors who have given the gift of life over the years. I think every one of us here knows someone who has been a recipient of that gift of life, and for that we are really thankful.

Just to reiterate, it's nice to hear the positive words that are spoken in terms of support for this bill. We know that, following the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order. Go ahead.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I thought that was directed at me for a second.

That belief was upheld by the Krever commission, that recommended that donors of blood and plasma should not be paid for their donations except in rare circum-

stances. That was acknowledged. Our position is consistent with the Krever commission's report and that's why the government is moving ahead with steps to maintain the integrity of Canada's blood system.

I've heard from a number of my constituents in Newmarket–Aurora, one of whom was a victim of the—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If the member for Simcoe–Grey could just take it down a notch. I'm having trouble hearing him.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's Simcoe North, sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry; Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Sorry. I apologize.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I was looking for Jim Wilson.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I hope you find him.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You'll be the first to know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Go ahead; I'll let you finish.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I don't know if I've run the clock down or not, but I think I had about 15 seconds yet.

I just wanted to make the comment that I've heard from a number of constituents, one of whom was a victim of the whole tainted blood issue. They contacted me specifically to say that blood should not be paid for and that we should be doing whatever we can as a government to ensure that that doesn't happen. I'm happy to go back to them when this bill passes, and I believe it will pass, to tell them that that's been done.

Thank you to the two previous speakers for acknowledging the importance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. I was a little worried you might say I was looking like the member from Simcoe North.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're allowed two strikes.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I can see that you're one up on the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, if he's got a breakfast out of you. The House wants to know if he'll ever get it back, knowing from his heritage—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, he's related to Ernie. I'm not sure.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Anyway, to talk about this bill, we are supporting it. It has got to be moved through.

There is some concern. I know the goal is always not to pay for blood products, but on the other hand you're paying now for 70% that's coming from a source that's unknown. I think that's a concern, and we'd like to hear from some stakeholders just how we can maybe change that. Nobody likes the idea of paying for blood, but in essence we are, and we're losing control of how that's done when we purchase it from outside the country.

On the pharmacy regulation, again, it's oversight that was lacking for many years. We've seen people die from

such a problem. It's really hard to know just how much of an impact it had on many people.

It's time for this government to step up and ensure, especially in the health industry—this lack of oversight is in many areas, whether it be Ornge or you look at eHealth. It's just a continuing list of issues that we know about. I guess there are lots; it's a large ministry and a complex ministry. But it speaks about, when there is evidence on the floor here—the NDP and ourselves are highlighting it—the reluctance of the government to really look at some of the issues, certainly on Ornge.

We're looking forward to this bill and we think it needs to be passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to add my voice to the discussion again, and again I want to make it clear that we are in support of this bill. This is a bill that I think it's clear all members of the House are in support of, and the member made it very clear that he also recognizes this is a serious issue. It's an issue that we take as something that's quite important. Again, we want to clarify our position that we absolutely support and cherish our voluntary blood donation system that we have here in Ontario. It's something that we're very proud of.

There are a lot of merits to the system that we do have. Having a voluntary system ensures quality and a reliable source of blood, and it's something that also speaks to our values as Canadians and as Ontarians that we want to give back to our community. One of the catchphrases about giving blood is it's "giving the gift of life," and it really is. It's something we truly honour and cherish.

0950

In addition to that, we've heard a lot of comments, and the member brings this issue up as well, about the importance of accountability and oversight. It's quite important; it's of utmost importance. It's one of the primary roles that we play here in the House: that as legislators, we ensure that the system that we have works effectively and in a manner that we can trust and that actually takes care of the citizens of this province.

But there is a serious issue. I raise this again, and I want to raise it one more time to make it absolutely clear: If we have a piecemeal approach such that, any time a problem comes up, we come up with a piece of legislation to address it, it's not a long-term, sustainable solution. It's a limited solution.

We're asking this government: If you're serious about accountability, particularly in our health care, which is one of the most sensitive areas and one of the most precious areas of care in our province, or sectors in our province, then please extend the Ombudsman oversight to the health care sector to ensure we have that independent oversight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I'd like to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora as well as the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Stormont–Dundas–

South Glengarry and, of course, Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their insightful comments. I do certainly appreciate this.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora had spoken out and said that he knew of an individual who had in fact received some tainted blood. I, too, know someone—a neighbour, actually, several years ago—who had received some tainted blood and actually had come down with hepatitis C. He's doing well, but he was quite sick for quite some time. We have to safeguard against that.

The issue of pay or not pay: There are pros and cons to that. I think we need to be really, really insightful and taking the initiative, to ensure that we have plenty of (a) blood, and (b) plasma stored up in the event of—well, not just for regular operations and people needing transfusions and so on, but also in the event that there is a massive tragedy and suddenly hundreds, if not thousands, of people are in dire and desperate, desperate need and whatnot. So I think we need to take a look at this.

But, again, I'd like to remind people to go to the Canadian Blood Services website, which is www.blood.ca, to get more information as to where they can donate. I think it's very, very important.

Again, I want to simply say that I know there are many, many people out there who are trying to put safeguards in place. I want to thank all of the people out there who have donated blood or plasma, because you are in fact giving what I call, and many call, the gift of life.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. It is a treat to stand here in the House today and join you, because you're having so much fun in the chair this morning. As you know, normally I'm in the public accounts committee at this time, so it's unusual for me to be able to share some time with you as you chair this hearing this morning.

I always compliment you, because I believe you're doing a terrific job up there, and I know you really enjoy it. So that's why I enjoy being here, as you're having fun over there.

Interjections.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I think he's doing a pretty good job. Actually, the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, when he's up there, does a pretty good job as well. So it is a treat to be here this morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: He wants a breakfast too.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me just say, before I begin my discussion here, that I'm sorry I missed your talk last night at the steel producers' reception. I heard you gave a barnburner of an address to the crowd last night. I missed it. I got there late, because I was in the House until about 6:30 last night, I think it was.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd just like to—sit down, please.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to thank you for your compliments and everything. I'd like

to call a little order, because when he's talking nice things about me, I'd like to hear them. Thanks a lot.

You may continue. Thank you very much.

Mr. John Yakubuski: And keep it up.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, I think I'll turn the page on that at the moment.

I used to be a blood donor myself. When you come from the ragweed capital of Ontario—in the fall, when I was younger, I would get hay fever and so I'd have to take medication in the fall. That meant I couldn't give blood in the fall, which was always a problem. But I enjoyed my time as a donor until I came down with high blood pressure. Once you take high-blood-pressure pills they don't want you to donate blood anymore.

I do have to mention that a very good friend of mine was caught up in that terrible problem we had years ago with the tainted blood scandal. A woman I worked with for many years at the CBC after a pregnancy and a blood transfusion came down with hepatitis C, and unfortunately she's no longer with us. I mention that.

I'll also give you two numbers to think about this morning as I start, and that's 290 out of 1,200. Some 290 patients in Windsor Regional Hospital and Hôtel Dieu in Windsor were affected by the dilution, the underdosage, of chemotherapy drugs back in 2013. I mention that number because, in a community of our size, when you have 290 patients affected, you're bound to know one or two of them. I have to say that a good friend of mine—one of the best criminal defence lawyers in Windsor and Essex county—his wife was one of the 290 who received the underdosage of the chemotherapy drugs.

I am not a cancer survivor. My father passed away from various cancers. But I just imagine if you go to your doctor one day and you're told you have cancer. You might get a second opinion or a third opinion and then you come to terms with that, but the psychological effect is there. Then you begin your treatment. You put all your faith in your doctor, you put all your faith in the treatment, all your faith in the system. I believe, as I'm sure most of us in this room do, that our health care system in Ontario, as flawed as it is in some ways, is still the best in North America, if not beyond. I'm not trying to knock our health care system whatsoever. But from time to time, things come up.

God bless the government for trying to find ways to save money, because we know there's not a lot of it around these days. There are a lot of promises out there that have yet to be kept because of a lack of funds. But when you want to change a system that's working, you put out to tender the provision of chemotherapy drugs—the IV bags of drugs to fight cancer—and you make a change in the supplier, you go to the lowest bid, the lowest common denominator, and you think you're going to save some money.

Throughout that tendering process, somebody slipped up somewhere along the line. Instead of tendering for a specific amount of dosage, it came out as a more generic number. So 1,200 patients receiving chemotherapy drugs—290, as I say, in Windsor; 691 in London at the

London Health Sciences Centre; 37 at Lakeridge Health; one in Peterborough; and 183 in my home province of New Brunswick.

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These are people who put their faith in the system. Their life is on the line. Let's not kid anybody about this. Their lives were on the line. They're fighting cancer. They know what the dosage is supposed to be; their doctor knows what it is supposed to be. You've got all your faith in that, and then you find out along the way that you've been receiving drugs that were less than what you should have been receiving. Just imagine the psychological effect of that. Here you are trying to put on a brave face for your family, trying to put on a brave face for your doctors and your caregivers, and instead, you come up short.

Then what happens? What happens psychologically? How do you deal with that? I put myself in their shoes, and I say, "How would I deal with that? I want to get better. I'm doing what I should be doing. I've got all my faith in the system, and then the system has let me down." I think I'd be really troubled by that. The foundation of our system was rocked by this scandal, and I just can't get over that. There was a screw-up. Somebody should have been held responsible.

Our Standing Committee on Social Policy looked into it. An outside expert looked into it. There were all kinds of recommendations. Some of those recommendations are being addressed, but some aren't, and that's why, when we get through second reading of this bill and it goes to committee, there should be more amendments to this bill, more improvements to this bill. We owe it not just to the 290 patients in the Windsor-Essex county area but to the 1,200 patients throughout Ontario and New Brunswick who had received lower dosages than they should have received based on their diagnoses. So this bill has to be improved.

I really want to thank all of the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, who got into this in a very big way last year. I know our health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, did an outstanding job during those discussions and brought to light many of the recommendations that should have been put into bill, and some of them have yet to be included.

Speaker, as you know, I'm relatively new to this chamber. I was elected in a by-election last August and then re-elected in June of this year. When I first took my seat—actually, it was September last year when the House reconvened just after Labour Day—one of the things that I remember is our health critic from Nickel Belt, Ms. Gélinas, speaking to the then health minister from London, Ms. Matthews, about a clinic that was about to open up in Toronto that was going to pay people who wanted to donate blood or plasma. I remember our health critic from Nickel Belt saying, "But, Minister, if you weren't dragging your heels on this, you would have put a halt to it. You would have brought in legislation to prevent this clinic from opening, long before we were at this stage," because in the media at the time, there were

all kinds of stories out there that this clinic was about to open up. The federal government wasn't doing much about it, but Ontario has, and has now, the ability to put a stop to that, and it didn't happen. Our health critic kept saying, "When are you going to take action?" You know, it's a little late after the clinic opens, after the payments begin.

At some point, I imagine there will be legal challenges. That's part of the system, but with the legal challenges come costs, and costs, of course—from the government's perspective, all that money comes from my pocket, your pocket, Speaker, the taxpayer's pocket. If we're paying lawyers and paying court costs on something that could have been prevented, we're wasting tax dollars.

We know, in this House, how hard-to-come-by those tax dollars are. There's not enough money. There's lots of money out there, but money that we want to see better spent on health care—they're saying that there's not enough money.

The member from Windsor West, Ms. Gretzky, has been up in the House recently, talking about cutbacks at the CCAC service delivery level in Windsor and Essex county. People—the elderly, the vulnerable—who have been receiving CCAC home care services for years and years and years are now being told: "There's no money left. We don't have enough money to give you a bath. We don't have enough money to come to your home." A lot of these patients don't have somebody else who can step in and say, "Don't worry about it. I'll provide that service."

We know the health care system is struggling financially. We know it's a great system. Don't get me wrong; it's one of the best systems in the world. But money is tight, and when we see things happen in the health care system that are costing us money, costing us tax dollars, we say that we should be doing a better job. We should always be doing a better job. We should always be thinking about the taxpayer. When the health ministry hasn't stepped in and hasn't shut it down, and now we're going to have court challenges, I say that's a waste of tax money.

I'm going to be sharing some of my time with the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, one of the most passionate speakers in the House and, as you know, the nephew of another member from the Conservative caucus. We always like to remind him of that. We've turned one member of the family over to the New Democrats; we're hoping to turn the other one before his legislative days are over, if I can put it that way.

I just want to say, it's in you to give. If you want to be a blood donor, they would certainly like to have you down there. To all the donors in the province of Ontario, thank you for doing what you do to help our system along, because we know it's very important to have blood donors in our system, bringing safe blood, the gift of life, back to some of us who need it. Keep those supplies coming in.

Speaker, thank you for your time this morning. I would like to leave at this point and donate the rest of my

time to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, who told me when I came in this morning, "By the way, you're not only going to fill in instead of being in committee this morning, but you're going to stand up and talk for 20 minutes." For that, I really wish him well the next time we get together socially, so that I don't spill any drinks on him or anything, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to be able to stand in this House today and talk about Bill 21. But first I would like to commend the member from Windsor—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. John Vanthof: Windsor-Tecumseh. The reason that he was singled out this morning is because the chemotherapy scandal had such an impact on people in his area. He agreed with me that it was a good thing that he could take the time to talk about that.

I would like to spend the few minutes that I have talking about the dilution of the chemotherapy drugs. When someone is diagnosed with cancer, for the family of the person who is diagnosed, it's probably one of the most vulnerable times in their lives. It's one of those times when you expect the system to work. In this case, it didn't.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize some of the people who actually identified the problem, because if you think about—wasn't it in Peterborough that it was identified?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: Can you imagine that moment when someone realized there was a problem? If you've ever been involved sometime in a supply chain issue, and you're the one sticking up your hand saying, "Whoa, hold the phone. There's a problem"—but when you're dealing with people's lives, can you imagine that moment? Can you imagine how much those people put on the line to say, "Whoa, wait a second"?

It's been our experience since with this issue that when the system appears to be working and someone puts up their hand and says, "Excuse me, it's not"—the system isn't always that reflective: "Oh, yes, I think there's a problem." The wheels want to keep turning. They don't want to stop and recalibrate. For the people who did that and who made this system stop, our hats should be off to them all.

We're here now discussing after the fact. The true problem is that there were no natural checks and balances. That's what we're here discussing today and what this bill is trying to change. There were no natural checks and balances in the system to make sure this doesn't happen again. We support this bill, but what we're worried about is that although we're trying to plug a couple of holes—and my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton said the same thing—it hasn't been demonstrated to us that the government is really looking at making sure natural checks and balances will be inserted into the system to prevent cases like this from happening in other parts of the health care system. That's what we're con-

cerned about. We're really concerned that the government, in their haste—yes, they're going to plug a couple of holes; that's why we're in favour. But in their haste, it will only be a couple of holes. It will be a Swiss cheese with a couple of holes plugged, but lots of other holes.

We're sure that those holes are identifiable. This is a great system—our health care system is a great system—but we see problems all the time. It's our hope that when this bill comes to committee, we are actually allowed to take the time to look and fix as much as we can to make the system work as well as it should on behalf of the people who trust it with their lives.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I've laid upon the table a special report from the Auditor General entitled Education Sector Collective Agreements (September 1, 2012-August 31, 2014).

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to welcome Jennifer Blunt from Portage Ontario, who is here with us in the members' gallery. Ms. Blunt is here to recognize National Addictions Awareness Week and to raise awareness of the fine work that the Portage facility in Elora is doing to help treat youth with serious substance abuse and addiction issues. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Blunt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de présenter M^{me} Andree-Anne McPhail. She is a youth from the Canadian Cancer Society. She is joined by Janika Francis, Sabrina Bailey, Devanshi Adhvaryu, Sinthiha Krishnan, Vithusha Ganesh, Kalaisan Kalaichelvan and Shadi Mousavi Nia.

We also have some representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society: Nicole McInerney, Joanne Di Nardo, Kelly Gorman, Florentina Stancu-Soare and Julie Datta.

Please extend a warm welcome to them. They're here to support a ban on flavoured tobacco.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to welcome back to Queen's Park Salima Lakhani, the mother of Moiz Lakhani, who is the page captain today, from Ottawa South.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Ryan Konopny. He's my high school co-op student. Wave to us, Ryan. He goes to Thornhill Secondary School in my riding. It's nice to see you, Ryan.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to introduce Dr. Sheri Findlay and Dr. Brandon Meaney, both children's physicians at McMaster Children's Hospital. Speaker, they actually paid at a silent auction to be my guest, to spend a day with me. I know I speak on behalf of the whole House and yourself in welcoming the doctors here to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I would like members to join me in welcoming Andrew Clark, who joined us, with the Federation of Community Power Co-operatives, this morning for breakfast downstairs.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to welcome a grade 8 class at De La Salle College here in Toronto. The students are in the balcony there. Wave, students. How are you? I'd also like to extend a very special welcome to Evelyn Locke, who is one of the students there. She is the daughter of my chief of staff, Pina Martino.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, in the east lobby members' gallery, from the city of Salemi in sunny Sicily, we have the mayor, Domenico Venuti, and councillor Vito Scalisi. We also have, from Toronto, Domenic Renda and Carlo Agusta. I hope they enjoy their stay here.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'd like members to join me in welcoming the Ontario Home Builders' Association to the Legislature this morning. A good Hamiltonian, president Vince Molinaro, is here, as well as their CEO, Joe Vaccaro.

The OHBA day at Queen's Park will be hosted from 5:30 to 6:30 this afternoon, and I'd invite everybody to attend.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to welcome Heather Bone, Faizul Mohee, Raphael Redmond Fernandes, Mitchell Keay, Jaya Deonandan and Zhe Tang. They are students from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University PC campus clubs.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Sabrina Bailey, who is a youth with the Canadian Cancer Society and also a student at Carleton University, which is located in my community in Ottawa Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to recognize Brenda Hodgson, who is here. She's the provincial director of the Nation at Prayer organization. Welcome, Brenda.

I also want to welcome everyone from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, especially from Durham. I'll be meeting with those folks later today.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted to welcome to the Legislature today representatives from the Canadian Cancer Society: Nicole McInerney, Joanne Di Nardo, Kelly Gorman, Florentina Stancu-Soare and Julie Datta, as well as youths Andree-Anne McPhail, Janika Francis, Sabrina Bailey, Devanshi Adhvaryu, Sinthiha Krishnan, Vithusha Ganesh, Kalaisan Kalaichelvan, Shadi Mousavi Nia and Krissy Truong. Please welcome them all.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the world's most awesome canvasser, 13-year-old Ethan McCready-Branch. Please stand. Hello.

Ethan was by my side almost every day during the campaign. He got here today thanks to his dad, Greg Branch, who took the day off work. They are here from Kitchener Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With your indulgence, on behalf of the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, we have with us visiting in the west members' gallery Aidan Niedbala and his mom, Jennifer Niedbala. We welcome them. Thank you.

With us in the Speaker's gallery on my left, on the premise of a silent auction bid for the Rotary Club air show, are David and Michelle Gowling. Welcome for a day at Queen's Park with Dave.

Also, we have special guests in the Speaker's gallery today: a complete delegation from the Party History Research Centre of the People's Republic of China. Please welcome our guests.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Last but not least, if I could have—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. I do need your attention for this announcement.

I find myself once again needing to address the House on the issue of the use of electronic devices in the chamber and in committees. Regrettably, my attention has been drawn to the fact that photos taken from the floor of the House or from a committee while they are meeting have been showing up on members' social media accounts and elsewhere.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find this an extremely important point to make, and I would appreciate your attention.

As I have previously advised all members, as have my predecessors in the Speaker's chair, it is never permissible for pictures to be taken from your BlackBerrys or other devices here in the chamber or in a committee. The practice of the Speaker overlooking members using certain devices as long as their use is silent and unobtrusive does not extend to their camera functions.

Let me lay out the rules once again. Devices must always be set in silent mode. The members may not read directly from them while they have the floor, nor may the telephone or camera functions ever be used either here in the chamber or in committees. I expect all members to comply with this directive.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm happy to hear that Jim Bradley will no longer be able to bring his Polaroid camera onto the floor of this assembly.

My question is for the Premier. Premier, the members for Parry Sound—Muskoka, North Bay and Kenora—Rainy River have all demanded action to save the pulp mill in Fort Frances. Even the Minister of Natural Resources—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —yesterday grudgingly admitted, "Timelines are tight and we need to ensure the building is heated."

Some 200 direct northern jobs are at stake and another 800 indirect, yet the government remains complacent, unable or unwilling to secure employment and opportunity for Fort Frances. Given the government floundered on the sale of the mill to Expera, will the Premier commit today that she will instruct her minister to find a way to heat the mill this winter?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry will want to comment on the supplementary, but I will just say to the member opposite that I think it is laudable that she is taking an interest in a northern issue because, as we have always said, this is one Ontario, and it's very important that everyone in this House understand that.

As the minister has said repeatedly in question period, we have been engaged on this file from the beginning. We are in conversation; the minister has been in conversation with the owner of the mill. We are doing everything in our power, if there's a deal to be had, but these are private sector entities that have to deal with market realities and deal with each other. But we are doing everything in our power to stay engaged and, if there is a resolution, to help facilitate that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What I heard there is that she and her minister do not understand the importance of 200 local well-paying jobs in remote and rural Ontario. But I can assure her of one thing: The Progressive Conservative caucus does understand that. We understand that a good job is a good opportunity. We also understand that in Fort Frances, to create this investment opportunity, the government must act today, not grandstand with blustery bravado, as the minister has done in the assembly.

We know that heating the mill this winter would extend the timeline for Resolute Forest Products to sell the mill. Will the Premier and her caucus put as much time into Fort Frances's crisis as they have just done on her recent trip to China?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is a very serious issue, and the economy in the north is a very serious issue. That's why I have made it my business to travel repeatedly to the north to meet with companies and municipal leaders in the north.

It's extremely important to me that I was part of the northern debate and that I gave people in the north the opportunity to interact with me—and that was not the first time I had been in the north.

The fact is that we have taken this issue very seriously. It's why in our platform we made it clear and in our practice we have made it clear that partnering with business, working with business, is a fundamental part of the trajectory for economic success in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, I heard no response to the people of Fort Frances that you're taking their concerns seriously.

I grew up in a small town, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where the pulp and paper mill was one of a handful of steady employers, so I understand more than anybody that an industry like this could be the bread and butter of the local economy. It can mean prosperity in good times and paucity in bad.

I am asking the Premier to think of Fort Frances: the mothers and fathers who want to work, their kids who want to go to post-secondary education and the municipality that is right now worried about what negative spinoff effects this is going to have if this mill is closed for good. Think of them and act now.

I finally ask you one more time: Will the Premier waste no more time and move today to save Fort Frances's pulp and paper mill so that there will be good jobs that go with that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: To the member, maybe if, during the election, you or your leader or your party had gone north of Barrie, somebody would be taking you seriously here today in the Legislature. Maybe if you would have shown up, then we would be taking this seriously.

I guess if I wanted to speculate today as to why this particular member is asking this particular question, we could all have a little fun here this morning, but it is a very serious issue.

Just a month ago, the member from Parry Sound was in Thunder Bay complaining about money that we had contributed to private sector businesses, calling it "picking winners and losers," calling it "corporate welfare." Well, maybe the next time the member stands up today in the Legislature and asks a question about this particular enterprise, and this particular business-to-business relationship, she can explain why this one isn't picking winners and losers, and she can explain why this one isn't corporate welfare.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I dare say the minister should stop talking about losers, but my question goes back to the Premier. On September 16, US Steel officially filed for bankruptcy. The plant permanently shut down back in December 2013—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod:—ending more than a century of steel production at the Hamilton plant.

For years, Ontario steel was the staple of building modern cities and supporting a number of key Ontario industries, including the automotive, energy, construction and mining sectors. But under 10 years of Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector and uncompetitive tax regimes, giants of industry have fled and been driven out of Ontario as a result of the loss of thousands of direct and indirect steel industry jobs.

Can the Premier explain how her government can claim economic growth on the one hand while, in fact,

the evidence on the other is clear that her policies are driving jobs and prosperity out of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is going to want to speak to this in the supplementary, but let me just put a couple of numbers on the table. The unemployment rate in Ontario is 6.5%. That is the lowest rate since 2008, Mr. Speaker. That is one number. The other number I want to put on the table is: more than 500,000 net new jobs since the economic downturn.

So the reality is that the economic plan that we have been acting on, and that we have put in place—the investment in infrastructure, the partnering with businesses, the understanding that our economy is changing, the industry is changing, the investment in the talent and skills that our young people are going to need for the future, the recognition that supporting our education sector and helping it to link better with the labour market—those are the pillars of our economic plan, and they are working as we go through this transition in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Look, I understand that the Liberals are supposedly excited about bringing 80 new steel manufacturing jobs from China, but this is a Liberal government that has missed crucial opportunities, not only in Ontario, but in the rest of Canada, to promote hundreds of jobs right here.

Let's take, for example, the Alberta oil sands. They need a considerable amount of steel products. Companies working in the oil sands—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Stop the clock. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is warned.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yay!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock has been told now.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Laurie, behave. Your mother is watching.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No. Just let me do mine.

Please finish.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Companies working in the oil sands import around \$5.6 billion annually in manufactured goods. But illegally dumped and subsidized imports from countries like China are being used instead of Ontario steel, which has hurt key regions in Ontario, including Hamilton and including the north.

So my question is, why does the government continue to stifle Ontario manufacturing and export jobs overseas rather than working to stimulate our economy right here in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario steel industry's GDP is up 38% since the recessionary low in 2009, but this is a sector that globally is having some

serious challenges and Ontario can't remove itself from the global challenges, with regard to the steel industry.

What we can do is keep investing in the things that are important to help the steel sector: for instance, the auto sector. Investments that you call "corporate welfare" we call "strong investments to build a supply chain in this province." We're seeing record sales right now in auto, Mr. Speaker. If they had their way, we would have abandoned the auto sector, and those opportunities wouldn't be there.

Let me give you another example. The wind turbine production that has taken place across this province—a huge boost for our steel sector in this province. Those are the kinds of investments that are supporting the steel sector. Those are the kinds of investments that the party opposite has rejected.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Typical of that minister: It is rhetoric over reality every single time.

We are continuing to lose good and well-paying manufacturing jobs and Canadian jobs in the steel production industry because of illegally dumped imports and an uncompetitive businesses climate.

There are major opportunities out there. We are the fourth-largest market in the world. We should be embracing that. There are opportunities for Ontario steel from northern Ontario, Hamilton and elsewhere to contribute to projects in our province, Alberta and the rest of Canada, but you're making it more difficult.

Can you explain to me why you would rather import steel from China than look at local opportunities here and production in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Well, the protectionist party on the opposite side has kind of changed their tune. Their federal cousins talk about free trade; they're talking about protectionism. We're a trading nation. We're a trading province. We need to be open to trade. We can't get away from that.

But when she talks about an uncompetitive environment for investment, she's dead wrong. We're number one in North America for foreign direct investment.

We have just seen an increase of 37,000 net new jobs in this province last month alone, Mr. Speaker. We're up over half a million net new jobs since the global recession. That's almost 200% job recovery. When you compare that to the US, they're at about 115%. I call that progress.

There are still more people out of work in Ontario than we'd like, but we're going to keep investing in our people. We're going to keep investing in building a strong economy. We're going to keep putting Ontarians back—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The fall economic statement says that the annual

Auto Insurance Transparency and Accountability Expert Report has been given to the Minister of Finance. Why is the Premier keeping this hidden from Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's not hidden. In fact, we would have received the report much sooner had we not been forced into an election and had it not been delayed. As a result, the report is now before us. We're having it reviewed. It will be released very shortly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When the Premier was worried about her political future, she promised to lead the most transparent government in Canada. She even named the auto insurance expert report the transparency and accountability report. I'm sure George Orwell would be having a chuckle about that, Speaker. But now she's keeping transparency reports hidden. In fact, when I asked the question, the Premier and the Minister of Finance wouldn't even admit that the transparency report even existed.

Is the Premier going to deny the existence of the auto insurance transparency report?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member opposite doesn't seem to understand the response that I just gave moments ago. The fact of the matter is, the report was commissioned. We issued it, we initiated it, and we anticipated it long ago. But it didn't come because of the delays that were caused by the opposition, by the unfortunate resolve for an election, which for us and for the people of Ontario was a welcome relief, because now we've got a majority enabling us to act quickly on the issue of reducing auto insurance rates.

The report will be released momentarily. It's before us. It's being reviewed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Apparently the secret transparency report on auto insurance shows that the Liberals claim that they cut auto insurance by 8%, and now the Liberals are keeping the report hidden from the public. What other embarrassing details are in the report that the government is so interested in keeping hidden?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite can revise her questioning as opposed to looking at a script, and maybe listen to the answer. The report is before us. It's being reviewed. It will be released momentarily, in time. Let's get it done.

But what we need is time to review it. Had it not been for the delays made by the opposition—and frankly, they have actually voted down the very measures necessary to reduce auto insurance rates. It looks like we're going to have to do this without their help. It will be released shortly, it will be before the House, and it will come out in time.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Let's hope the report is original and not cleansed by the Liberal Party.

My next question is to the Premier, Speaker. People are wondering how they can actually trust this Premier. On April 20, 2014, the Premier said, "We won't cut education," but education consultation documents say that the Premier's plan is to cut \$500 million from education. Why is the Premier breaking the promise she made to Ontarians just seven months ago? Besides the election being over, what else has changed?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Education will want to speak to the specifics, but the fact is that education funding continues to go up under this government. The reality is that we have a very strong record in terms of increasing education, but also supporting the publicly funded education of our students, and we will continue to do that.

The nine-page platform that the NDP put out actually had a \$600-million-a-year cut that would have had to take more funding out of education than the member opposite has frankly admitted. The reality is that we continue to put more money into education. We continue to support the publicly funded education system. That is part of the DNA of this government. We will continue to do that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier went on the campaign trail saying she wouldn't cut education, but here she is, cutting education and leaving students behind. The Premier seems to be in denial. I call cutting \$500 million out of education an education cut. What does the Premier call it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you very much. I think what we do need to recognize is that this is a province where we have fewer children than we used to have. We need to have savings in the education system to account for the fact that we have fewer kids than we used to, but that doesn't change the fact that we continue to increase the funding for education. We have invested this year \$22.5 billion in education. That's a 56.5% increase since 2003. The funding for each and every child in Ontario's education system has gone up over \$4,000 per child since we took time—so yes, we do have the demographic reality, which not even the opposition can change, that the average family today has 1.1 children. They used to have four or five children. The opposition leader—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Pre-election, the Premier said that she wouldn't cut education. Post-election, the Liberal government is slashing \$500 million from education. Pre-election, she said auto rates had come down by 8%. Post-election, we see that they haven't. Pre-election, she said she wouldn't sell off assets. Post-election, she's planning to sell off local hydro utilities. Pre-election, she said Ontarians would get answers on the gas plants. Post-election, she's protecting key witnesses. Pre-election, she promised that child poverty would be reduced by 25%. Post-election, the government hasn't even come close.

It has been five months since the election, and that's five broken promises by this Premier, so I ask her again: What has changed, except that the election is over?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Unlike the party opposite, we understand that this is about finding savings. We actually think that what we want to do is fund the children who are in our school system, not fund empty seats.

Speaker, do you know that we are currently spending about \$1 billion on empty seats? We think that there are some efficiencies and savings there, and in fact, our school board partners agree. They have done things like amalgamating back offices to get savings from joint back offices. They have amalgamated transportation. They're sharing school space. We think that that's a great use of school space, to have two boards come and share one school. That's the sort of efficiency that we believe our school system can have, and still have a wonderful education system which is fully funded for students, not seats.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Attorney General. As you know, when a person is released on bail, there are conditions imposed on them, such as house arrest or limiting where they can go. But if they break their bail conditions, they must return to court for further restrictions or go back to jail.

There are disturbing examples like Christopher Husbands, who is facing charges in connection with the Eaton Centre shooting while he was under house arrest. Clearly, no one was monitoring him.

1100

Minister, how many individuals in Ontario are currently released on bail, and what happens when their bail conditions are broken?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you very much. It's a very important question, and it's a very unfortunate situation.

When someone is released on bail, there are some conditions attached or there are no conditions attached. Where there are conditions attached, this person needs to respect the conditions that are attached to their release on bail, and if they fail to comply with the conditions, then they will be back in jail.

But I know there is some concern about the bail system. We're told that there are too many people who have many conditions attached to their bail. There is a committee that was put together by my ministry to review the bail system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, I'm looking for numbers. I want a quantitative idea of how many people in Ontario are out on bail with a condition. You say you want to crack down on the underground economy, but you can't even track the criminals who are already out there. How can it be that your ministry is not tracking this information? This is a matter of public safety. You have an

obligation to follow through and make sure that those who break their bail conditions are punished.

Given that you have already admitted in an order paper question that you do not track this critical information, what steps will you take to ensure that people are following their bail conditions and that the people of Ontario are safe?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The member is right. We do not collect statistics provincially on the number of people released on bail, because I can give a number today and the number is different tomorrow.

Copies of bail orders are provided to the appropriate police service, and the individual police services establish their own system and practices to monitor those who are out on bail. The police know which accused persons have been released on bail, and they pay special attention to high-risk individuals.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games. We know, despite the government's mantra that everything is on budget and on time, that many of the construction projects for the Pan/Parapan Am Games are behind schedule. How far behind? Well, that information is going to cost you.

I suppose when you're the government and you stage the most expensive multi-sports game in Canadian history and the costs keep going up, we shouldn't be surprised when they demand over \$4,000 from Canada's most widely read newspaper to release documents about just how far behind they really are on these venues.

Will this government dispense with the outrageous fee requests and tell Ontarians the real status of the 10 new sports facilities under construction—information asked for by the *Toronto Star*—and any delays that are involved?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the important question today.

These are the most open and transparent games in the history of this country. In fact, if you look at multi-sporting games internationally, these are the most open and transparent games that have ever come forward.

We know that TO2015 is working with the requester to refine the scope of the FOI, to reduce the costs. But I think it's important to understand that this process is an independent process. It's impartial, and it's conducted by the public service. In fact, it's consistent with all other provinces. It's the same process that was in place when the Conservatives were in power, and it's the same process that was in place when the NDP was in power.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, the government has not released this information to the members of this House, and not to the *Toronto Star* and to all Ontarians, without a price.

Game organizers, in this electronic era, say they cannot provide the requested information on a disk, some-

thing routinely done by other ministries and agencies at all levels of this government.

These games' organizations ultimately report to the minister and his ministry on how to provide electronic information. So will this minister and the government either require Pan/Parapan Am Games organizers to release the information right now or have the ministry obtain and then immediately release the requested information to the Ontario public?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, these games are the most open and transparent games ever brought forward in the history of this province and in the history of this country. We made sure that TO2015 was brought under the FOI legislation. It's the first time that any games have been brought under this legislation.

TO2015 has fully complied with the FOI regulations, and again, it's consistent with all other jurisdictions across this country. There are 6,000 pages that have been requested. TO2015 is working with the requester to ensure that information can be brought forward that is cost-effective. They'll continue to work with them.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Han Dong: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As the proud member for Trinity-Spadina, I know how much my constituents care about public transit. It was, in fact, the most concerning issue in my riding during the last provincial election. The constituents use transit to get to work and to school in the morning and then home to their family and friends at end of the day. They want me to make sure that our government is doing everything we can to help keep public transit both safe and efficient.

I'm proud to have one of Canada's busiest transportation hubs, Union Station, in my riding. Many people in my constituency use this hub to move around the city and the region.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: I heard a few weeks ago that there were some improvements to be made to the signalling system at Union Station. Could the minister provide the House with some more information on those improvements?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina not only for the question but also for his continued advocacy on behalf of those that he represents so well in this Legislature.

That member is correct. Two weeks ago, I was very happy to announce that our government is working to make transit more efficient for commuters in and around the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. We will be making improvements to the entire signalling system within the Union Station rail corridor. These improvements will ultimately enhance service reliability, eliminate track bottlenecks, increase train speeds and reduce operating costs. Work on this project will begin in 2015 and is expected to be completed by 2019.

Decisive actions like this help ensure that we are making it easier for transit riders to make seamless connec-

tions when travelling. It also ensures that we're prepared ahead of time for the anticipated doubling of transit ridership over the next 20 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for his response. I know my constituents will be very happy to hear about these great improvements.

I recently heard an announcement by our government alongside Metrolinx and Ivanhoé Cambridge to further the redevelopment of Union Station by connecting it to a new downtown GO bus terminal. This is a very exciting announcement as this development will provide more travel options to my constituents and the GTHA.

Can the minister tell the House what implications these new bus terminals will have for commuters both in my riding and around the GTHA?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for that question.

I am very proud to be a member of a government that actually invests in public transit. I can say that there are so many tangible examples to prove this fact. The member is right: This September, I was pleased to announce that Metrolinx will be partnering with Ivanhoé Cambridge to build a new downtown GO bus terminal at 45 Bay Street. This new terminal will provide commuters with better convenience and choice by having inter-city bus carriers GO, Via Rail, TTC and the UP Express all at one central location. This terminal will also welcome GO Transit's fleet of environmentally friendly double-decker buses to downtown Toronto. Construction of the terminal is expected to start in the spring of 2015 and will take approximately three years to complete.

Projects like these are an excellent example of what can happen when we work together with our private and public sector partners to invest in our communities. Thanks to the advocacy of that member and others on this side of the House, we're getting the job done.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A month ago, I introduced my private member's bill to bring more transparency and accountability to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Since then, I've heard from people across our province. Their stories of running into the wall of silence as CPSO closed ranks, foiling attempts to get answers after the death of a loved one, are heartbreaking. They've convinced me that something needs to change, but the reality is, 3% of private members' bills introduced here have received royal assent since 1975.

1110

Minister, do you agree that the current complaints reporting system is broken, and will you work with me on any reasonable reforms in my bill to make some changes at CPSO?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course I'm always happy to work with my esteemed colleague from across the other side, but I want to point out that we've already made and

are making important changes in terms of transparency, accountability and oversight for all of our regulatory bodies, including the CPSO.

In fact, several weeks ago, I wrote to all of the regulatory bodies that have a role to play in oversight in the health care sector, asking them to incorporate additional transparency measures in their business plans and to report back to the ministry by December 1 with regard to the specific activities they will undertake on a go-forward basis with regard to further transparency and accountability. I believe it's good for the colleges, it's certainly good for our health sector and it's good for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the minister: Minister, I know you're a doctor, but I think we have to acknowledge that the system is broken and you have the authority to fix it.

Media reports indicate that just 2% of the 2,294 complaints investigated by CPSO last year were publicly available. What about the other 98%? Shouldn't the veil of secrecy be lifted from those investigations? Only you have the power to give Ontarians the information that CPSO won't voluntarily. The buck stops with you.

My question is, are you going to stand with patients and transparency, or are you going to close ranks with fellow doctors and the CPSO?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm not sure if the member opposite was actually listening to the first response I made to the question—that we are taking action. I think it goes without saying that my top priority and the priority of this government is the health and safety and well-being of all Ontarians. The mandate of the CPSO, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, as with all regulatory bodies in the health sector, is that same objective: the health, safety and protection of Ontarians. I know that the CPSO and the other bodies are working diligently toward that object.

We are not standing still on this issue whatsoever. We have taken a number of measures that I articulated in the first part of my answer. Transparency is of utmost importance. It makes for a better health care system. An informed patient in Ontario is important in terms of strengthening the quality of care that they receive. It's certainly something that we continue to work diligently on, Mr. Speaker.

TOBACCO CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est également pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

In 2008, my private member's bill to prevent the sale of flavoured cigarillos passed. You know about this very well; we co-sponsored it. But tobacco companies worked overtime to find loopholes in the law. The tobacco companies' unwillingness to co-operate motivated the Big Tobacco Lies campaign from the youth group of the cancer society, and they are here with us today.

Last year, your government said that they wanted to ban flavoured tobacco. I've reintroduced the bill to ban

flavoured tobacco products. My question is simple: Will you support the bill?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I also want to thank her for coming out today, as she was out with me and a number of other MPPs. We had a great tug-of-war organized by the Canadian Cancer Society. On the one side we had flavoured tobacco, and on the other side was the good side. I'm happy to say that the good side won and flavoured tobacco lost the tug-of-war.

But it's important that we win the real war against flavoured tobacco and the way they are trying to make inroads into our youth. This government and I are committed to doing everything that we need to do to ensure that we make Ontario the lowest-smoking jurisdiction.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, did you know that today, 57,000 youth are going to use flavoured tobacco right here in Ontario?

We know that the packaging, the price, the distribution and the marketing of flavoured tobacco target young people. Flavoured tobacco is, most of the time, the first product that youth consume. Other products, such as smokeless and imitation tobacco, follow the exact same business model. They are all meant to seem harmless, but they encourage experimentation, and they make sure that the next generation of smokers gets addicted.

Youth are in attendance today, and they want to know: How much longer will we have to wait before we protect our youth and before the government acts and bans flavoured tobacco in Ontario?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I really appreciate the question from the member opposite, but I do want to point out that before the election, this government introduced legislation that would have banned flavoured tobacco. If that side had supported us and not brought forward an unwarranted election, by now flavoured tobacco would be banned in Ontario.

On this side of the House, we walk the talk. We actually do things to reduce smoking, and that is why you probably heard my announcement last week, when we banned smoking on outdoor patios, and we re-committed to bringing back legislation to ban flavoured tobacco, legislation that would have passed if you had supported us.

CHILD CARE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation.

Minister, the safety of our children is something we, and I, take very seriously. Since 2003, this government has prioritized child care and early childhood education. We know it's important to families that they have access to safe and modern child care in order to make sure our kids get the best possible start. This is why we've introduced Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

I know that when you hear about the four deaths in unlicensed care, and the call from the Ombudsman to take urgent action, it is imperative we move fast in getting this legislation passed. That is why, Minister, I was so pleased to welcome you to Ottawa to meet with several members of the CICPO in Ottawa. Minister, can you please tell us about these discussions?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans for the question.

Last Friday, I was very pleased to meet, with my Ottawa colleagues, with a number of representatives from the CICPO—that's the association representing the independent child care providers in the Ottawa area. We had a very good discussion with them. I do take their concerns very seriously, and we had a good discussion of the issues. There will be some areas where we disagree.

Passing this bill, Bill 10, which is what we were talking about—we do need to remember that it's about the safety of our children in care, and that we can't afford to delay it any further. By playing games, the opposition is delaying implementing safety measures for our children.

The recently released Ombudsman report is crystal clear that if we don't make some of these fundamental legislative changes to the child care sector, we are putting children—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Minister, on behalf of my colleagues in Ottawa, I want to say thank you—merci—for coming to meet with members of the CICPO. The open and transparent conversation was appreciated by those in attendance. There were some constructive ideas that emerged, and I look forward to working with those in my own riding to ensure further progress on those ideas.

However, Minister, we keep hearing irresponsible comments coming from the party opposite. They themselves are creating confusion that they say exists in this sector. Minister, my understanding from my colleagues on the committee is that there are many stakeholders who have expressed their support for Bill 10. Can you please elaborate?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I do want to acknowledge that after the discussions in Ottawa, we were able to get back to the Ottawa members with some updated information for their constituents.

But with respect to the public hearings on Bill 10, I think it's interesting to note what some of the presenters have said. For example, the Home Child Care Association Of Ontario said, "Bill 10 represents a very important step forward to increasing the basic safety for these children."

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Anne Laws from Montessori Quality Assurance said, "The government of Ontario has strived to ensure the safety and well-being of young children by introducing Bill 10."

Carolyn Ferns from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care said, "There is broad support ... for the many

protective measures provided for in Bill 10. ...it's an excellent bill.... We have ... support for it."

The Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development concluded, "A modernization of child care legislation is long overdue."

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Premier, will you commit to fund and implement John Tory's \$15-billion SmartTrack plan? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: What an interesting—fascinating, in fact—question from this particular member. I say "fascinating" because repeatedly, week after week, this member stands up and does his very best to throw cold water and to suggest there are all kinds of reasons that we shouldn't move forward with building Ontario up.

I know that over the last number of weeks, and certainly going forward, this Premier and our government on transit and on transportation infrastructure projects that are so crucial to communities like Toronto, like Kitchener-Waterloo and so many others—we'll work, of course, closely with all of our municipal partners. That is the best way to move the province forward and also the best way to make sure that, as we invest the \$29 billion over the next 10 years—\$29 billion that that member and his party opposed in our budget—that we'll get the job done right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Such a simple question. John Tory won a mandate for his seven-year SmartTrack plan last month—in fact, the clock is already ticking—and it's your responsibility to ensure that concurrent plans using our tracks and tax dollars make sense.

Now that the finance minister has admitted to a gaping half-billion-dollar hole in your tax-and-spend barrel, major financial commitments like the \$15 billion you will use for GTA transit plans must have stable funding, in fact, to move forward.

We already know you plan to tax us with HOT lanes and gas tax for transit, but can you commit today that the \$15 billion announced for GTA transit will not mean other new and increased taxes for Ontarians?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for that supplementary question that kind of went all over the place. I think what's really important to remember, Speaker, for that member in particular, given that he represents the wonderful community of Kitchener-Waterloo, is that we actually have a plan to move his community forward, to build the province up. We plan and will, in fact, deliver over the next 10 years on two-way all-day GO service, regional express rail, which will provide the people of his community with the extraordinary opportunity to take the GO train service. That is part of our \$29-billion plan over the next 10 years to build the province up.

We will work closely with Mayor-Elect Tory. We'll work closely with mayors from his community, mayors right across the province of Ontario to—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener—Waterloo, come to order.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —and I sincerely hope, Speaker, that that member and his party will belatedly get on board with our plan to move the province forward. It's never too late for that member and his party to do the right thing.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. When the Premier ran for the leadership, she promised 1.8 million Ontarians with disabilities that she would make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. During the election, the Premier promised to instruct all ministers on their duties to meet that promise. But the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance reviewed her mandate letters, and they were shocked by the silence on full accessibility.

Why did the Premier say one thing during the election and break her promise to persons with disabilities now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is going to want to speak to this because the issues around helping people with disabilities to get into the workforce and making sure that we have an accessible society are very much a part of his mandate.

I just want to be very clear that our commitment to making Ontario accessible is firm. The reason that the accountability rests with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is that we know that one of the fundamental challenges for people with disabilities is accessing the labour market, becoming part of the economy, being able to use their skills and their talents. It's a fundamental part of the work that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is doing, and I know that he will want to speak to the specifics.

I understand that the standards that have been put in place are being enacted and being enforced, and that we have more standards that we are going to be working on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: The Premier's mandate letters give ministers their marching orders, but the letter asks the minister to do nothing but explore new standards.

Even the former minister admitted that compliance was unacceptably low; that 70% of private sector companies with 20-plus employees are in violation of the act.

Speaker, accessibility enforcement must be a real priority for this government. Will the Premier now issue an order to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to effectively enforce the AODA?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, that order was issued loud and clear when the Premier gave me this file. This is not a side file for my ministry at all; in fact, it's an absolute necessity, a priority. That's why we just recently appointed David Onley as a special adviser on accessibility: to be a champion both inside and outside of government for us.

We're determined to continue to make progress. We're talking about billions of dollars of economic opportunity that will be there for our private sector, will be there for our taxpayers, will be there for our economy if we're able to achieve these very ambitious goals that we've set out to achieve. We're the first jurisdiction in the world to set out in a legislative way to move forward in this way.

We still have plenty of work to do. With the help of David Onley, the accessibility community and others, we're determined to make this happen.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Premier, in her capacity as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. I think this is an important question, and I certainly want to hear the answer to this.

Premier, I understand that you have written to the Prime Minister on a number of occasions wanting to meet with him to talk about shared goals; for instance, talking about economic growth, developing safe and prosperous communities and building a strong Ontario within Canada.

There are other things to talk about, including working collaboratively with Ottawa on public infrastructure.

Given the number of severe projects we have in Canada that need attending to, it would be a good idea to get together to talk about this. How about talking about the auto sector, international trade and the reduction of trade barriers?

Premier, has the federal government been willing to meet with you to talk about these important interests?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to thank the member for the question.

As many in this House know, it has been more than 11 months since I've had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper face to face.

On September 16, I wrote to the Prime Minister, requesting a meeting to discuss a variety of issues relating to economic growth, developing safe and prosperous communities, and building a strong Ontario within a strong Canada, because I think those things are connected. As the member mentioned, there are several areas where I think we can have a more collaborative relationship; working together to create opportunities to build more security throughout people's lives.

Just yesterday, Prime Minister Harper replied, but he made no mention of my meeting request.

That's why I've written again this morning, requesting a meeting before the end of 2014. I believe that it's a

much better situation when the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of our country's biggest province are able to work together collaboratively, so I look forward to hearing the Prime Minister's answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you for that answer, Premier.

I think that there are other things that we need to talk about; for instance, federal transfers. How about talking about our employment insurance system that really does not seem to meet the realities of our modern labour market?

We are also moving on in Ontario with a provincial public pension plan that's aimed at securing better retirement for our future and for our citizens, but could we be talking with Ottawa about making sure that all Canadians coast to coast have the same?

Finally, this House has called on the federal government to take action to address violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Premier, how can we work collaboratively with Ottawa? How do you do this job?

1130

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm listening to some of the heckling on the other side, but this is not a partisan issue. This is about the Prime Minister of Canada meeting with the Premier of the largest province in Canada. I think that working collaboratively is exactly what needs to happen: creating jobs and growth in the economy, working together to reduce congestion so that we spend less time commuting and more time with our families, and building and renovating the schools, hospitals and roads that allow Ontarians to function.

My concern is that the current system of federal/provincial fiscal arrangements is working against, not for, the people of Ontario, and that is a discussion that needs to happen. My fear is, as the federal government has been missing in action in terms of working with the province, that that would continue, and I don't think that that's acceptable.

We have asked for that meeting. I hope we'll be able to talk about investment in the Ring of Fire, infrastructure and the ways that we can collaborate.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. A Chatham-Kent constituent of mine found an 18-inch section of a wind turbine blade on his farm while farming this spring. He found a blade on his property some 400 feet from the base of the turbine in question. I have documented proof, and I will be sending these pictures over to you for review.

Fortunately, there was no damage to his property or personal injury to anyone, but this raises a very serious safety issue. Picture a 2.3-megawatt turbine with a blade length of 135 feet, standing some 400 feet tall. It should also be noted that the blade tip speed rate rotates at 164 miles per hour.

I, along with many of my riding, am rightly concerned for the safety of my residents. Premier, my question to you is simply this: Will your government do the right thing and put a moratorium on turbine developments until there is a thorough review of safety standards pertaining to industrial wind turbines?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, I want to thank the member for bringing that particular issue to our attention. It's not something that I had been advised of previously, but certainly we will take that under advisement. We'll look at the circumstances around this particular issue.

We do have a very robust environmental assessment process moving forward, but I think we have to understand that, when something like this happens, we need to look at it very carefully in terms of public safety. It's the same as a piece of metal falling off an airplane, which occasionally occurs; you try to avoid those things happening as much as possible.

I take your question seriously. We'll look into the circumstances. I will consult with my colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change with respect to environmental assessments—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —and we will check with our—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I shouldn't have to say "thank you" twice.

Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, the message from the government could very well be that public safety isn't a problem, but Premier, recently Transport Canada ordered GDF SUEZ in my riding to take down eight industrial wind turbines that have violated airport zoning regulations at the Chatham municipal airport.

Premier, I've spoken with many pilots, and they all say that it's too dangerous to fly in and out of that airport, especially when there are adverse weather conditions. These turbines pose a huge safety issue around any airport, whether it be in Chatham or even Collingwood. Literally translated, Premier, an encounter with one of these imposing turbines or pieces of shrapnel will result in body bags. None of us want that.

Premier, safety trumps all, and I know you know that. I'm not an aerospace engineer, but I do know that shrapnel travelling at close to 200 miles per hour poses a significant safety risk for aircraft and humans.

My question, Premier, is this: Will your government take the initiative, since you are paying huge subsidies, and review turbine placement and provincial safety standards for turbine erection in all of Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First, I want to say that we take these things very seriously, and safety standards have to be second to none, so I want to assure the member that both myself and my colleagues on this side will take it seriously.

I do want to make sure that we have perspective on this, because I know you live about two blocks from here, and I know that the building next door to you had

several large pieces fall off of it, and glass fell to the street. That was one of about seven buildings in central Toronto at which that happened. That is also an equally serious problem. No one opposite suggested that we put a moratorium on condominium construction in Toronto, because you know what the reaction would be.

We have to make sure that we're taking all of these problems seriously. We take this very seriously when we see glass falling out of a condo tower or when we see a piece coming off a wind turbine. But wind turbines cannot be held to a higher standard of safety than any other similar situation. I hope that we'll get as many questions on condo towers as we'll get on wind turbines.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Statistics Canada job numbers released earlier this month were bad news for London. At 7.5%, London's unemployment rate is now a full percentage point higher than the Ontario average. Not only has the unemployment gap widened between London and the rest of the province, but the stats also show fewer people are working in London and fewer people are looking for work.

Will the Premier admit that her jobs plan is failing to address London's economic challenges?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, Mr. Speaker, no, I won't do that, and I will ask the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to speak to the supplementary.

But what I will say is that we recognize that the economic recovery has looked different in different parts of the province. We absolutely understand that. I know that there are people in this province who are still not able to get the jobs that they are capable of, and that businesses still need support. That's why we have different strategies in different parts of the province. That's why we have regional development funds, such as the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. That's why we have taken the initiative to make sure that we understand the economy of different regions in the province.

We know our work is not done, but we also know that the direction we're going in is exactly the one we need, and that the economic recovery is taking hold but not evenly in all parts of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. Last month, we saw 1,100 people leave the London-area labour force, followed by another 200 people this month. In fact, since 2008, London has lost over 30,000 positions. Many of those leaving are young people, depleting our labour pool of the young talent needed to move our city forward.

I'm glad the Premier talked about different job creation strategies. We want to know when this government will introduce strategies that actually work for London.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Strategies that work: the member should have been paying attention when our finance

minister made his economic statement this week and he talked about our youth employment strategy. There are thousands of young people in London who are getting job experiences through that—23,000 young people across this province are.

The member should pay attention to some of the programs that are going on in her community. The South-western Ontario Development Fund, for instance, provided over \$2.6 million, leveraging \$30 million, in creating and sustaining 806 jobs in the London area. There are others as well.

We're working very hard. We recognize some of the challenges London has had. The unemployment rate in London has gone down, but there are still too many people out of work in that part of the province. We're going to continue to work really hard to bring down that unemployment rate. It's now at a record low since 2008 across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I'd love to continue to talk to the member about other initiatives going on in London, but my time is running out.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It sure has.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I want to acknowledge and thank the young people and the Canadian Cancer Society for organizing this morning's tug-of-war to raise awareness of candy-flavoured tobacco products.

In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, I have many young people who are championing a smoke-free Ontario. We have come a long way when it comes to a smoke-free Ontario, but the use of tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. More than two million Ontarians continue to smoke, and thousands of young people are taking up smoking every year.

Recently, I hosted a 10,000 Coffees event in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Many young people continued to complain to me about the flooded market of candy- and fruit-flavoured tobacco products appealing to young people.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she please explain to us what she is doing to protect young people in Ontario?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to begin by thanking the member from Agincourt for her question and also thanking her for joining us this morning at the tug-of-war against flavoured tobacco.

I completely agree with the member that we here in Ontario need to do everything we can to make sure that Ontario is the lowest smoking jurisdiction. That is why, last week, I was pleased to announce new regulations to prohibit smoking in restaurant and bar patios, sports fields and around playgrounds starting January 1.

Also, as this House will recall, last year we brought forward legislation that, if passed, would have banned flavoured tobacco products. It would also have increased

penalties for selling tobacco to kids, making them the highest in Canada, and strengthened tobacco enforcement.

I have been very clear that I intend to reintroduce this proposed legislation. I look forward to tabling it soon and receiving the support of this House.

DEFERRED VOTES

PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please take their seats?

On October 29, Ms. Matthews moved second reading of Bill 8. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Nicholls, Rick
Ballard, Chris	Jones, Sylvia	Oraziotti, David
Barrett, Toby	Kiwal, Sophie	Pettapiece, Randy
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Marlins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vermile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Dong, Han	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fedeli, Victor	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted	Yakubuski, John
Gravelle, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Harris, Michael	Moridi, Reza	
Hoggarth, Ann	Munro, Julia	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Mantha, Michael
Miller, Paul
Natyshak, Taras

Sattler, Peggy
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 76; the nays are 19.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 18, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce members in the east gallery here from the Ontario Lung Association. We've got George Habib, the president and CEO, Chris Yaccato, Andrea Stevens-Lavigne, Sherry Zarins and Vivien Agyapong. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Last Wednesday, my interim leader, Jim Wilson, and I had the pleasure of hosting a round table discussion in Belgrave with seven family health teams from across my riding of Huron-Bruce. The number of concerns and challenges facing family health teams in our province has been expressed by the participants, and it was truly eye-opening.

For instance, restrictive funding agreements with zero budget flexibility and the "use it or lose it" budgeting system these teams are forced to work under do not make for smart or efficient health care planning. Costs of doing business continue to rise, and all the while family health teams are struggling with allotments set back in 2008. There are huge salary discrepancies caused by uneven government funding to health care providers, and that's crippling family health teams in terms of their ability to hire and keep staff. There is a burden on front-line workers and inaccurate and inconsistent measurements of performance and service provision. And it's important to note that 110 out of 185 family health teams are located in rural and northern communities.

I suggest that this government must get out of their urban bubble and recognize the diverse health care needs of communities across Ontario, and enable all providers to do their best. Family health teams deserve to be respected, and allowed the tools needed to effectively support their communities.

OPP COMMISSIONER'S CITATION FOR LIFESAVING

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I rise today to pay tribute to two extraordinary women that I'm very proud to say are from my riding of Cambridge. On Friday, November 7, at the Ontario Provincial Police's annual awards ceremony where officers and community members are recognized for acts of bravery, dedication and service, Rachel Grant and her mother, Rebecca Mantynen, were awarded the OPP Commissioner's Citation for Lifesaving.

One morning while vacationing at the Peninsula Lake resort, Rebecca and Rachel were walking along the beach when they noticed a man and a woman in the lake. When they realized that the man and woman were in trouble, and seeing that there was no lifeguard on duty at that early hour and no one else rushing to their aid, Rebecca jumped into the lake and swam towards the victims, followed by Rachel close by, having grabbed a nearby stray life jacket that she had found on the ground.

When they reached the man and the woman, they discovered the man was drowning and, in a panic, was pulling his sister down with him. Acting quickly, they saved the man from drowning, put the life jacket on him and waited for a nearby buoy line from a rescue boat to arrive.

I must also mention that Rachel's mother, Rebecca Mantynen, was a former work colleague of mine. I, along with the rest of my community, am extremely proud of both her and her daughter's selfless acts of bravery.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise today to share the concerns of the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce about this government's 148% aviation fuel tax increase. They said:

"We view our airports as one of the main drivers of growth in our region's economy and we take a keen interest in the competitiveness of Canadian airports.

"We are specifically concerned over the impact this tax change has at local and regional levels. We want and need to see business and industrial traffic grow at our own Tillsonburg Regional Airport, and we want to stem the flow of thousands of people in the Tillsonburg and London region who regularly head to Detroit, Buffalo or Niagara over price issues."

Earlier this week, we heard that government revenues once again failed to meet the projections. The chamber of commerce understands, as we do, that attempting to increase revenues by implementing huge tax increases is short-sighted. Other jurisdictions are reducing or elimin-

ating fuel taxes because it creates new jobs, fuels economic growth and will result in increased government revenue.

This increase will be a cost to everyday people and companies—the people who live in remote communities, the child going to visit their grandparents, and a cost for companies to ship items by air. Some of those people will just make sacrifices as a result of this tax increase, and some will look for options outside our borders.

That's why the Tillsonburg chamber of commerce and my colleagues on this side of the Legislature agree: It's time to ground the flight tax increase.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today I rise to share with the members of this Legislature a tragedy that recently occurred in my hometown of London. A fatal fire broke out on Oxford Street, in what was known to be an unlicensed group home for people living with mental illness and addictions. This house had a long-standing history of violating fire code regulations and was visited on more than 10 occasions by city of London fire inspectors. Further, this location was also known to the city of London by law enforcement and public health officials because of numerous complaints, ranging from bed bugs to sewage issues, broken windows and overcrowding.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission made recommendations to the government last year that would protect people with mental illness and addictions to ensure they had access to safe housing and supports.

We believe this tragedy highlights the lack of oversight into programs for people with mental illness and raises concerns about the lack of licensing and regulation for homes like this. Had this been a licensed group home, this incident would have triggered an immediate inquest by the coroner's office, as many leaders in mental health organizations have called for. My colleague from London West and I have joined their calls for a coroner's inquest and will be following their investigation closely.

New Democrats believe that access to safe and affordable housing is a basic human right for all Ontarians. Conducting a coroner's inquest is the best way to achieve transparency and to help our community get the answers they are looking for. Only then can we move forward with real solutions to prevent this type of tragedy from happening again.

CROHN'S AND COLITIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm honoured to rise today in support of Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are the two most common forms of inflammatory bowel disease, or IBD. These are lifelong diseases that cause inflammation in the gut and have no known cures and no known causes.

Ontarians have more reason to be concerned about Crohn's and colitis than anyone else in the world. With

nearly 95,000 Ontarians living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, our province has the largest population of people living with these chronic diseases in Canada. One in every 150 Canadians suffers from Crohn's and colitis. Our country, on the whole, has a rate that ranks among the highest worldwide. Families new to Canada are developing Crohn's and colitis for the first time, often within the first generation. These diseases are escalating in children at an alarming rate, especially those under 10 years of age.

With over 10,000 new diagnoses every year, in addition to the nearly quarter million Canadians living with Crohn's and colitis, these diseases are more than twice as common as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease, and are about as common as type 1 diabetes and epilepsy.

My family has been touched by this disease and I've seen first-hand how devastating it is.

Today I'd like to recognize Aida Fernandes, Helen Silbiger and Natasha Mistry from Crohn's and Colitis Canada, who are here to help raise awareness about these chronic diseases.

ONTARIO SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Bill Walker: Last month, I attended the 2014 senior achievement awards at Queen's Park, where two distinguished constituents in my riding were selected to receive awards in honour of their outstanding and generous community contributions.

I was honoured to meet and greet Mae Smith of Chesley and her four children at the awards ceremony on October 30, where Mae was recognized for her exemplary service to her community. Her list of community involvement is a long one: Chesley Legion Ladies' Auxiliary, where she served as the group's secretary for 60 years, and Branch 144 of the Royal Canadian Legion, where she still continues to serve as the archivist. She has also served as a member of the horticulture society for 30 years, the Louise Women's Institute, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Mark's ELW group, Worthy Mistress of the Chesley LOBA, the Chesley hospital auxiliary and the palliative care team, the Chesley Agricultural Society and as chair of the Chesley Fall Fair's arts and crafts division.

1510

I was also honoured to meet and greet Shirley Johnstone, and members of her family, of Tobermory on receiving this prestigious award for her valuable contributions over the years. Shirley has volunteered with the Royal Canadian Legion for more than 30 years. She is president of the Seniors Connect program, a founding member of the local Bruce Trail Association, the friends of the Tobermory library, chair of Grey-Bruce tourism association and a member of the Trillium foundation board and Tobermory Health Services Auxiliary.

I believe Shirley's and Mae's Senior Achievement Awards, the highest provincial honour for senior citizens in Ontario, are indeed well-deserved. Congratulations to this pair of outstanding senior citizens from the great

riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and all the best for many more years of good health and voluntary activities in the future.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, anyone who has walked outside in the last 24 hours and anyone who has looked at clips on YouTube or on the news will know that we're experiencing unusually cold weather. In Buffalo, they have had snow coming down in ways that people have not seen for many decades, some never at all.

As the world is warming up, heating up, weather patterns are changing. What was normal is being disrupted. Where it was cold, it's getting hotter; where it's hot, it's getting cold. Right now, Alaska is on track to be 70% above norm for this time of year while people in Buffalo and as far south as Texas are freezing.

At the same time, the world is on track to overshoot the amount of carbon it can emit, to go way past the amount of carbon in the atmosphere that would limit temperature increases to 2 degrees centigrade. We're looking at closer to 4. At 4, we look at extraordinarily disruptive weather patterns.

We need a climate plan in this country and in this province that sees us continuously reducing our greenhouse gas emissions over the next few decades. Speaker, people need to have an opening, an opportunity and support from governments so that they can cut their greenhouse gas emissions dramatically.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CONNECTIONS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Constituency week was a very busy time in my riding of Kitchener Centre. I had the opportunity to visit with a lot of individuals and groups who are providing important services in my community, including one group called Community Support Connections, which provides the Meals on Wheels program. Having a hot meal show up at your door means that those seniors and adults living with disabilities can continue living at home independently and with dignity.

Did you know that close to 300 people a day in Waterloo region are getting meals delivered to their doors? Of course, none of this would be possible without a small army of volunteers. About 600 of them rotate through the cooking, the packaging and the delivery of these meals. Mr. Speaker, even I had a chance to roll up my sleeves and put on a hairnet and join the food line.

Here's a very interesting aspect of this service: Executive director Dale Howatt told me that for many of these seniors, seeing one of these volunteers come to the door with a meal is the only human interaction that they have all day, and for some, all week. Based on this, the agency has decided to set up an added service where volunteers go back to visit the isolated individuals and they have a visit.

Mr. Speaker, it makes me very proud to know that there are people in my community who are kind enough to give of their time and their energy to reach out to those

in need with such a terrific program like Meals on Wheels.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Speaker, today I would like to recognize World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, known as COPD, is a general term used to describe chronic lung diseases, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, which cause limitations in lung airflow. Key risk factors for COPD include tobacco smoking, air pollution and exposure to occupational dusts and chemicals.

About 840,000 people in Ontario have COPD. Over 5,000 hospital emergency department visits related to COPD each year take place in my riding's local health integration network of Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant.

Awareness about this disease is vital, and the research-based pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim is doing their part. This important company, located in my riding of Burlington, recently partnered with the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, the CFHI, in an effort to bring better care and outcomes to COPD patients through a program called, appropriately, INSPIRED: Implementing a Novel and Supportive Program of Individualized care for patients and families living with Respiratory Disease.

The World Health Organization predicts that COPD will become the third leading cause of death worldwide in 2030. The Ontario Lung Association and Boehringer Ingelheim are doing their part in the prevention and management of chronic lung disease, tobacco cessation and prevention, and air quality with respect to its effects on lung health. I salute them both on this important occasion, World COPD Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I see the member for Essex rising on a point of order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I beg your indulgence and that of the members to introduce some friends who are here today at Queen's Park from my riding of Essex. We have Ben Klundert, who is the president of the Greater Windsor Home Builders Association and, I'm proud to say, is currently building our new home in Essex. I'm very happy to have him here today, as well as Dennis Gerrard, who is the executive officer of the Greater Windsor Home Builders Association. They're here today with the Ontario Home Builders' Association to meet with us all as parliamentarians to discuss the issues around home building in the province of Ontario. I want to welcome them here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While that's not a point of order, welcome. We're glad you're here.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 1474486 Ontario Limited.

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive 469118 Ontario Limited.

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive 658055 Ontario Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AGRICULTURE INSURANCE ACT (AMENDING THE CROP INSURANCE ACT, 1996), 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'ASSURANCE AGRICOLE (MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 1996 SUR L'ASSURANCE-RÉCOLTE)

Mr. Leal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur l'assurance-récolte (Ontario) et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'll make a statement during ministerial statements.

LUNG HEALTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SANTÉ PULMONAIRE

Mrs. McGarry moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease / Projet de loi 41, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie pulmonaire et visant l'élaboration d'un plan d'action provincial à l'égard des maladies pulmonaires.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce my proposed private member's bill, entitled An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council.

The broad goal of the bill is to develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease. Interestingly, as we've heard, today is World COPD Day. Almost 850,000 Ontarians are living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which is the province's leading cause of hospitalization and is one of the leading causes of death.

This bill would establish the Lung Health Advisory Council for the purpose of making recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care regarding lung health issues, would focus on research, prevention and treatment of lung disease, and would raise lung health awareness of the risk factors for developing lung disease.

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTION OF CHAIR OF YORK REGION), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉGION DE YORK)

Mr. Ballard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide that the head of council of The Regional Municipality of York must be elected / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités pour prévoir que le président du conseil de la municipalité régionale de York doit être élu.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I would like to thank you for the opportunity to rise today to reintroduce the Municipal Amendment Act (Election of Chair of York Region), 2014.

First, I would like to thank my colleagues from Oak Ridges–Markham and Richmond Hill for the tremendous effort that they put into crafting this bill in years gone by. This session, the constituents of Newmarket–Aurora urged me to move this bill ahead and get it passed.

Specifically, the bill would amend the Municipal Act, 2001, to provide that the head of council of the regional municipality of York region must be elected and may not be appointed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of bills?

Just before I start with the next section of routine proceedings, I do want to remind all members and ask you

that you pass this on to your colleagues. The tradition is to read from the explanatory notes of the bill. Doing it that way keeps us to the succinct message of what the bill is. If you start writing speeches, it takes you off that particular task. I would ask all members to stay focused on doing the explanatory notes. If the explanatory notes are long, you can précis them and just shrink them down. The idea is to simply get the idea of what the bill is. I would appreciate all your co-operation on this.

It is now time for statements by ministries.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, this Saturday is Holodomor Memorial Day. This day marks the anniversary of the mass starvation of millions of Ukrainians in the early 1930s. This was a tragic event in our world's history. It can never be undone and should never be forgotten.

Ukraine has long been known as the breadbasket of Europe because of its fertile lands, so it was no accident that famine occurred in the midst of plenty. It was intentional. Holodomor was a man-made famine imposed by dictator Joseph Stalin to gain control of Ukraine. The word itself translates to “hunger-extinction.”

During this time, Stalin's Soviet brigades seized food stored in Ukraine to help people survive the long and cold bitter winter, and then they deliberately blocked Ukrainians from leaving the famine-struck areas to find sustenance elsewhere. The results were relentless and harsh. Entire villages were wiped out. Corpses littered cities and roads. Generations were lost—men, women and children. An estimated five million to 10 million perished without record.

Today, we remember their sacrifice and pay tribute to the strength and resilience of the people of Ukraine. We salute the courage of the survivors, their descendants and the Ukrainian community here in Ontario and around the world. We support their fight to preserve their identity and expose the destruction left by the Holodomor. We share their heavy hearts as they remember those who perished in that traumatic winter and spring of 1933. We stand with them united.

Ontario MPPs unanimously passed the Holodomor Memorial Day Act in April 2009. It was the first tri-sponsored private bill of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Today, more than 330,000 Canadians of Ukrainian heritage call Ontario home. They contribute to our culture, our economy and our growth. We are proud so many people from across the world have chosen Ontario as a place of safety, of opportunity, of hope. We are proud of this diversity. We are proud to be a province of equality, where freedom of faith and expression are valued.

Today, we join with the Ukrainian community in sorrow and remembrance. We reaffirm our commitment

to freedom and human rights, and we renew our promise to fight human injustice in all its forms.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm proud to stand in the House today on behalf of Ontario's two million students to acknowledge Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

We know that a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for students to succeed in the classroom and beyond. It's the responsibility of everyone in the school community to promote respectful and caring relationships that support the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of our children and students. That is why today and every day this week thousands of students and educators across Ontario will be recognizing Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

We have been leaders in bullying prevention policies. Our government has led the way by developing strong legislation, such as the Accepting Schools Act, followed by resources for school boards that address bullying and victimization through prevention, intervention and student support.

The Accepting Schools Act, introduced in 2012, is the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It provides a definition of bullying and cyberbullying, and also requires school boards to take measures to prevent and address inappropriate student behaviour. This important legislation is helping to make every school in Ontario a safe, inclusive and accepting place to learn, while at the same time ensuring every student has the support to reach their full potential.

As Ontarians, we must all work together to make our schools safe, inclusive and accepting places to learn. Let's use this week to help promote awareness and prevention of bullying each and every day of the year.

Today, as we recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, I'm pleased to announce the 11 recipients of the 2013-14 Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools. The winning schools this year are Agnes Taylor Public School in Brampton; Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Elementary School in Hamilton; Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School in Grimsby; Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary in Aurora; École élémentaire Carrefour des jeunes in Brampton; Erindale Secondary School in Mississauga; St. David Catholic school in Sudbury; St. Edmund Campion Secondary School in Brampton; St. Joseph Secondary School in Mississauga; Stanley Mills Public School in Brampton; and Valley View Public School in Pickering.

1530

Speaker, these annual awards recognize and celebrate Ontario's safe and accepting schools teams for the innovative work they have done in promoting a positive school environment and supporting student achievement and well-being.

There are incredible initiatives happening in our schools, and I know that is due in large part to the work of our safe schools teams.

At this time, as we celebrate the work of these teams, I'm pleased to officially launch this year's—or next year's, depending on how you look at it—Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools. I encourage students, teachers, educators, parents and community members across Ontario to recognize the great work of their safe and accepting schools teams by nominating them for a Premier's Award for Accepting Schools.

More information on the nomination process can be found on the Ministry of Education website in the coming weeks. On our website, you'll see a few videos that show initiatives to make our schools safer and more accepting places to learn.

Speaker, promoting student well-being is one of the key goals of Ontario's renewed vision for education. The other goals of this vision include achieving excellence, ensuring equity, and enhancing public confidence. We're very proud of our renewed vision for education, and we know that this vision for education will help prepare our students for a productive and successful future. Eliminating bullying is a key part of achieving that vision.

In fact, everyone has a part to play in creating a positive school climate and in fostering healthy and respectful relationships. Inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, cyberbullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence, and incidents based on homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, are totally unacceptable.

I encourage every member in the House today to recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, and to continue to promote the well-being of our students so everyone feels respected, valued and accepted.

Let's take this opportunity to come together to make a difference in the lives of Ontario's children, students and families.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to share with my colleagues my intention to seek approval of the proposed amendments to the Crop Insurance Act. One of the proposed amendments seeks to change the act's name to the Agricultural Products Insurance Act. If the proposed amendments are passed, the change in the act's name will better reflect what the act will allow in the future.

If passed, the proposed amendments would allow more types of agricultural products to be covered by production insurance. For those of my colleagues who may not be familiar with the concept, production insurance helps farmers deal with losses from natural events like weather, pests and disease. The costs of production insurance are cost-shared by producers and the provincial and federal governments.

Canada has a national suite of business risk management programs. There is a recognition that production insurance plans need to move beyond just crops to

include insurance for other agricultural products. The agricultural sector needs production insurance, not just crop insurance. Ontario is the only province without the underlying authority to meet this commitment.

Amending the Crop Insurance Act would let us better meet producers' needs and bring us in line with the other provinces. The proposed legislation would not only help producers manage risks, it would also encourage greater innovation, profitability and job creation in the agri-food sector.

In Ontario, production insurance is currently only available for crops like corn, soybeans and certain fresh vegetables. As we all know, Ontario produces a rich variety of foods that feed our citizens. If passed, expanded production insurance would give farmers who produce agricultural products other than crop and perennial plants access to the protection they need to safeguard their important investments. By allowing more types of products to be covered by production insurance, we would fulfill a commitment we made to Ontario's farmers under their Growing Forward 2 agreement in 2013.

All businesses need the right tools to help them manage risk. An expanded production insurance program will help Ontario's farmers continue to grow, innovate and, indeed, drive our economy.

Mr. Speaker, expanding our production insurance program would also help us responsibly manage the province's finances. When producers suffer losses and don't have production insurance coverage, they may come to us for direct or ad hoc assistance. We've seen ad hoc programs cost the province millions of dollars in a single year. An expanded production insurance program could have provided similar financial assistance but divided the cost between the federal government, provincial government and producers in a predictable and incremental way over a much longer period.

If our production insurance program is expanded, we would always know what our insurance expenses will be for the year. Even if we're surprised by a catastrophic event that negatively impacts our farmers, our expense to address lost production won't change, and we'll still be able to provide our farmers with the appropriate help in a timely manner. Production insurance protects both farmers and the government from unexpected costs.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment would set the stage for improved fiscal responsibility and has no immediate cost to our government. If passed, the proposed amendments would provide the authority to allow for an expansion in the number of commodities that can be covered under production insurance beyond crops and perennial plants. This would in turn level the playing field so that our producers can access the same kind of protection as every other farmer in Canada today.

Having the authority to expand the number of products eligible for production insurance would help us build a better business climate in Ontario, strengthen our province's valuable agri-food industry and, indeed, strengthen our farm sector. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. Jim McDonell: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I would like to join the Ukrainian community, and indeed all Ontarians, in observing the 81st anniversary of the Holodomor genocide. We must never forget the tragedy that swept across the Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. The land that was known as the breadbasket of Europe was ravaged by an artificial famine orchestrated deliberately by Stalin and his Communist regime. Ukrainians call this the Holodomor, often simply translated as “murder by hunger.”

People from Ontario and around the world will pause to remember the millions of men, women and children murdered by starvation. We must all stand with Ukrainian Canadians at commemoration ceremonies taking place across the country to honour both the victims and the survivors of this tragedy.

Six years ago, Canada was the first country to recognize this deliberate and systematic starvation of millions of civilians in an act of genocide. Today, the Ukraine and its people are being forced once again to defend their sovereignty and fundamental human rights. We must continue to stand against this type of aggression, and I commend Prime Minister Stephen Harper's call for Russia to remove troops from Ukraine.

So on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I stand with Ontario's Ukrainians as they observe this solemn occasion. We owe it to the victims, the survivors and our future generations. Thank you.

BULLYING AWARENESS
AND PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond today to the comments by the minister on bullying awareness week. I want to thank her for the comments and, going back to the Accepting Schools Act, I want to thank the government and I also want to thank our former education minister and education critic, Elizabeth Witmer, for her leading-edge work on that particular legislation.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the city of Orillia and the anti-bullying work that goes on there. It is not just for a week, Mr. Speaker; it takes place throughout the year. We have a group, the Orillia Youth Centre, run under the leadership of Kevin Gangloff. Kevin is the executive director of the youth centre. He brings neat ideas to the anti-bullying work each year.

Last year, we had an opportunity in the summer of 2013 to have Arlo Guthrie come to the Orillia Youth Centre prior to a concert at the Mariposa Folk Festival. He talked about anti-bullying at that event. The place was filled with children of all different ages from all different schools around the community.

1540

Even this week, anti-bullying week, we had the rock band Styx playing a concert at Casino Rama. One of the organizers of the rock band, Chuck Panozzo, and his brother John, who formed the band—Chuck will be at the

Orillia Youth Centre this Saturday afternoon meeting with youth and talking about anti-bullying.

I'm very fortunate that, through my riding association, each and every year, we buy a number of pink T-shirts that say “Stand Up! Orillia Against Bullying.” We're very proud of the fact that children from all over the community wear these shirts and promote anti-bullying in our community.

Finally, I would like to thank the Couchiching Community Initiative and Stand Up! Orillia Against Bullying. Ross McIntyre is the coordinator of that and does a great job every year. I want to thank all these people for standing up for people in my community against bullying.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: I've got a minute and a half to respond to this amended production insurance legislation for livestock. It is important, and it's overdue.

Any new PI program should provide incentive for producers to enrol, and I have a question: Will there be a premium holiday in the first year? Other questions: Will it be easy for farmers to forecast the amount and timing of payments? Can the payments be processed rapidly to get them into the hands of farmers quickly? Will program calculations be clear and transparent? Will each participant get a detailed statement, something like, say, the income tax forms that we receive back?

We wonder, will the program provide adequate response if there is—heaven forbid—another disastrous situation? I think of BSE and the impact on cattle. More recently, our pork industry was hard hit by the PED virus, resulting in a loss of 30% of Ontario's pork producing capacity. We know Ontario Pork has stressed the need for the province to take a look at mortality insurance. Also, will this enabling legislation help those beginning hog farmers who were frozen out of assistance back in 2007?

BULLYING AWARENESS
AND PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank all those who have worked hard to make our schools safer, and I want to congratulate those 11 schools that are being given awards for their efforts to make schools safer and more accepting.

But at the same time, we need to recognize that much more has to be done. When I went through the legislative process for adoption of the Accepting Schools Act, I talked to teachers, I talked to students, and I talked to parents. It was clear to me that much more needed to be done than any one bill was going to deal with.

There's a lack of social and psychological services in our schools. That means that some youth are more vulnerable. Youth who are at risk of getting into trouble or into conflict are at greater risk of getting into conflict. I know that unemployment and tough home situations make for stress, make for difficult psychological times,

for children who are going to school. Frankly, Speaker, our loss of education workers and teachers means a lack of adult supervision where it's absolutely needed.

My thanks again to everyone who has fought hard and worked hard to make our schools safer, and a clear statement that a lot more needs to be done.

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY

Ms. Catherine Fife: When residents of Kitchener-Waterloo pass by the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration on Victoria Street, they see a memorial recognizing the Ukrainian heritage in our region.

One inscription commemorates those who lost their lives during the Holodomor, or the famine genocide of millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. That inscription and others like it across Ontario and Canada help us to remember the suffering of millions.

Survivors of the Holodomor and their descendants are parts of our communities, and we must remember with them. There are over 300,000 people of Ukrainian origin in Ontario, and many have direct family connections to this tragedy.

The Holodomor has been called the forgotten genocide primarily because calling the actions of Stalin's regime a famine was forbidden in the USSR until the late 1980s glasnost period. However, the Holodomor, which is translated into English as "to kill by hunger," was a famine. It was catastrophic, and its scale remains unknown. It is estimated that at least four million Ukrainians were killed, but possibly as many as 10 million.

The famine was manufactured by Stalin's regime as a genocide of the Ukrainian people. Farms were forced to fill impossible grain quotas. Food was taken, leaving villages with nothing. One Holodomor survivor who came to Toronto, Mykola Latyshko, said in 2008, "Those who protested were beaten up, quite often to death. Those who were protesting even more were simply shot in front of their children, wives, mothers." There are also many stories from survivors of those desperate to survive resorting to cannibalism.

We must remember what happened in 1932 and 1933. In Ontario we mark the fourth Saturday of November as Holodomor Memorial Day. On November 23, take a moment to remember. The Ukrainian communities across Ontario will be remembering. I know that when I drive down Victoria Street in Kitchener this weekend and see that memorial at the Ukrainian Catholic church, I will also remember.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a pleasure to stand on behalf of my NDP caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to make a few comments on the government's proposed changes from the Crop Insurance Act to the Agriculture Insurance Act.

Crop insurance is one of the basic cornerstones on which our agricultural economy is built, because farmers

are at the mercy of the weather, and Mother Nature can be a cruel partner. As my counterparts in Timiskaming-Cochrane know, for many of them this year, crop insurance will mean the difference between paying the bills and losing the farm. The minister's proposal, I think, is 10 years too late. Nevertheless, to change the act so it could cover more commodities, and specifically livestock, is a step in the right direction.

This is enabling legislation, so there are a lot of rules and regulations to worry about. But if we just take a couple of recent examples, like PED in pork, BSE in beef and colony collapse in bees, those are examples of farms and farmers that could have and should have been insured. That will make the difference between paying the bills and losing your livelihood. When people pay their bills, they create jobs here.

We are looking forward to working with the minister and the ministry to make sure that this is done correctly and that it's done right the first time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's and others is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To request that the Minister of Health direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this and will be passing it to page Moiz.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, worsens over time and will eventually lead to death;

"Whereas there is an estimated 208,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease creates emotional, social and economic burdens on the family and supports of those suffering with the disease—over 25% of those providing personal supports to survivors of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia are seniors;

"Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020; and

"Whereas Ontario's strategy for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia has not been revised since the implementation of a five-year strategy in 1999;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately review, revise and implement an updated, research-informed, comprehensive strategy to respond to and prepare for the rapidly growing needs of those living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia."

I affix my name to this, fully support it and give it to page Vida to take to the table.

1550

LEGAL AID

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I agree with this petition and affix my name to it.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Toby Barrett: I also have a Lyme disease petition, Speaker.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I affix my signature to these other names.

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Maja.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition and I give my petition to page Johann.

LEGAL AID

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Petitions? Seeing none—the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your peripheral here, this is a petition with regard to legal services funding.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of more than 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I support this and I will give this petition to Jenny.

DIABETES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Liberal government implemented cuts to the Ontario health insurance program such that Ontario residents suffering from diabetes saw their annual eligibility for blood sugar test strips reduced to 200 per year, less than one a day; and

"Whereas a blood sugar test strip costs approximately 70 cents; and

"Whereas this latest cut to services to Ontario patients is just another misguided measure to nickel-and-dime Ontarians; and

"Whereas a focus on preventing disease and hospitalization is in the long-term interest of patients, their families and the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate full and unlimited eligibility for blood sugar test strips covered by OHIP for all Ontario residents suffering from diabetes."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Ella. Thank you.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: "Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year, depriving young people of economic opportunity and potentially displacing paid workers; and

"Whereas unpaid internships perpetuate poorer labour market outcomes for marginalized groups and those who cannot afford to participate; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing existing laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 22, the Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable Workers Act, which:

"(1) extends basic protections under the Employment Standards Act (ESA) to those currently excluded;

"(2) requires that posters with information about interns' rights in Ontario be conspicuously displayed in the workplace;

"(3) requires that employers provide interns with written notice about conditions of work, length of employment, hours of work, and job description, to be submitted to the ministry to enable the collection of data on internships; and

"(4) creates a system to allow anonymous and third party complaints about unpaid internships."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Maja to take to the table.

SHINGLES VACCINE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas one in three Ontarians will experience shingles in their lifetime; and

"Whereas shingles is a painful and stressful condition; and

"Whereas a vaccine is available for preventing shingles and is recommended for all seniors; and

"Whereas the shingles vaccine is currently not covered by OHIP;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To ensure the shingles vaccine is covered under OHIP for all Ontarians."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Nicole.

1600

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year, depriving young people of economic opportunity and potentially displacing paid workers; and

"Whereas unpaid internships perpetuate poorer labour market outcomes for marginalized groups and those who cannot afford to participate; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing existing laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 22, the Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable Workers Act, which:

"(1) extends basic protections under the Employment Standards Act (ESA) to those currently excluded;

"(2) requires that posters with information about interns' rights in Ontario be conspicuously displayed in the workplace;

"(3) requires that employers provide interns with written notice about conditions of work, length of employment, hours of work, and job description, to be submitted to the ministry to enable the collection of data on internships; and

"(4) creates a system to allow anonymous and third party complaints about unpaid internships."

I sign this petition and give it to page Claudia to deliver to the Clerks.

STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Petitions? You're very busy today. The member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: "Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas research suggests that work experience is a crucial factor in ensuring positive labour market outcomes for post-secondary students; and

"Whereas many post-secondary students are unable to gain relevant work experience, or participate in work experiences that do not effectively integrate with their academic program of study; and

"Whereas a 2013 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recommended that Ontario make much greater use of innovative work-integrated learning programs to combat youth unemployment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(1) bring together students, post-secondary institutions and employers in a provincial advisory council on work-integrated learning, mandated to make recommen-

dations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on various issues including:

"(a) how to engage more employers in providing paid work-integrated learning (WIL), and to improve regulation of unpaid WIL;

"(b) how to support post-secondary institutions in delivering quality WIL experiences for students;

"(c) how to ensure that all qualified students who are interested in participating in WIL are able to participate across different faculties and fields of study."

I affix my name to this petition, fully support it and give it to page Maja to take to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

M^{me} Meilleur, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I recognize the minister.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je prends la parole aujourd'hui devant l'Assemblée pour exprimer mon soutien au projet de loi de 2014 de lutte contre la fraude et de réduction des taux d'assurance-automobile. Cette loi propose quelques réformes nécessaires pour régler des problèmes importants dans le système de l'assurance-automobile. Ensemble, elles visent à lutter contre la fraude et à réduire les taux pour les conducteurs de l'Ontario.

Les mesures qu'introduit le projet de loi 15 permettront d'instaurer un système d'assurance-automobile juste et abordable pour la population ontarienne.

Nous savons que la fraude est un facteur qui fait monter les coûts de l'assurance-automobile. Ce projet de loi propose des mesures importantes pour poursuivre notre combat contre la fraude dans le domaine de l'assurance-automobile par le biais de réformes visant à réduire les abus du système. La réduction de la fraude contribuera à réduire les coûts, et la réduction des coûts permettra de réduire les taux.

Cette loi propose plusieurs solutions additionnelles pour protéger les conducteurs de l'Ontario et réduire les

coûts ainsi que l'incertitude dans le système de l'assurance-automobile de l'Ontario.

Bill 15 would change the dispute resolution system to help injured Ontario drivers settle disputes faster.

If passed, administration of the system would move from the Financial Services Commission of Ontario to the Ministry of the Attorney General's Licence Appeal Tribunal. This change would make the system more efficient and effective, while ensuring it remains accessible for accident victims.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would also implement measures to reform the prejudgment interest rate on general damages that are part of bodily injury claims for motor vehicle collisions. We are proposing to lower this interest rate by linking it to market conditions. This would help to reduce the cost of bodily injury claims in the auto insurance system, while still ensuring fairness for consumers.

We have also created a project team to provide the government with advice to help improve the investigation and prosecution of serious fraud, including auto insurance fraud. Their report is expected in early 2015.

Our government is committed to protecting the more than nine million drivers in this province.

I fully support the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, and I encourage my colleagues in the House to support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and to add to the debate of Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act of 2014.

Let me start off by thanking our critics, the member from Nipissing and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, for the hard work that they do to promote this particular issue. Of course, our member from Elgin-Middlesex-London has also worked on the insurance industry file extensively over the years, and his efforts have been vitally important as we look to reduce auto insurance rates for Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, we do find ourselves yet again debating a bill from this government with the intention of getting auto insurance rates down in the province of Ontario. This goes all the way back to the spring of 2013, when the Liberals were strong-armed, in my opinion, by the NDP into promising to magically cut auto insurance rates by 15% across the board. They might have this idea that 15 is a magic number: The NDP wanted a \$15 minimum wage and \$15 daycare as well. Anyway, at the time, they said that they would accomplish this goal within two years; that is, reducing auto insurance rates by 15%.

Members of the PC caucus said from the get-go that the NDP's demand for a 15% auto insurance premium reduction would have plenty of spillover effects and negative consequences, but we certainly agreed that Ontarians need a break when it comes to their auto insurance rates. We honestly felt that the bumper sticker promises were not the way to go, and we had our doubts.

Not long after the Liberals announced their promise, auto insurance rates actually increased. I remember hearing from my constituents in the riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex that they were upset and confused over why their rates were going up after hearing of the news that they were supposed to be dropping. I received calls from all over my riding: from Highgate to Blenheim to Leamington; of course, Chatham as well. Many of these people felt that they had been deceived.

As I mentioned, Ontario PCs were concerned that an oversimplified solution to a complex problem may not work. Time appears to be proving us right, as several news outlets are now reporting that this government is falling behind on delivering their promised premium reductions.

Many residents in the riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex are counting on the government to come through with their promise, and were surely shocked when CTV London reported a very familiar-sounding headline just last week: "Auto Insurance Rate Cut Behind Schedule; Ontario Insists It Will Meet Target." The report went on to say that the finance minister says that "with less than one year to go they have only seen a 6% decrease." That means with less than a year to go, the government will have to reduce auto insurance premiums by 9% in order to meet their original target. We all know, Mr. Speaker, what this government is like when it comes to meeting targets.

1610

That explains why they have quickly introduced this bill, Bill 15. Alongside my colleagues in the Ontario PC caucus, I firmly support the spirit of the bill and will be voting in favour of it at second reading, with the hopes that helpful amendments can be made in committee.

Fighting fraud and reducing automobile insurance premiums are goals that we can all agree on regardless of political stripe. If the Liberals wish to truly be an open and collaborative government, they will be willing to listen to all ideas when it comes to bringing some relief to Ontarians who are currently faced with the largest auto insurance rates in the entire country.

In addition to having the nation's highest premiums, the auto insurance market in Ontario has been described by some companies as "high risk."

Late last year, State Farm Insurance sold its entire property and casualty business in Canada to Desjardins Group. Moody's Investors Service noted that 65% of State Farm's Canadian business is concentrated in Ontario, an auto insurance market which is described as "a competitive and higher-risk market." But State Farm pulled out. This is especially significant given that State Farm held roughly 11% of the auto insurance market in Ontario. When a company of that size packs up and leaves the province while citing the auto insurance market as the main reason, I think I hear alarm bells sounding.

While some companies are leaving the province all altogether, others remain that are dropping drivers as they try to get even moderate-risk drivers off their books. The

following quote from a Globe and Mail article written in July 2013 predicted this potential negative consequence: "Without the right cost reduction measures, the decrease in premiums would be a challenge for insurers to implement, and could curtail the availability of coverage in the province."

We need to ensure that the cost reduction measures that we implement are the right ones or else we may cause more harm than good. There are examples of this happening in the past outside of Ontario. Those who follow their auto insurance history would be reminded of New Jersey's similar experience back in 1998 when New Jersey promised to cut their auto insurance rates by 15%. Many companies left the state, which made it difficult for drivers to get insurance. While the rates did come down by 15% over two years, the lack of available insurance led to a 27% spike in premiums in 2000.

What we don't want to see is insurance become scarcer for Ontario drivers. If that happens, it will leave many in this province in the dark without insurance. It will also drive rates up overall. That's a very serious and a very dangerous scenario. Let's hope that doesn't get played out.

While we all agree that costs should come down, we also need to do it in a very responsible and collaborative way to ensure that we mitigate the potential for unintended consequences that see rates rise even higher. This is an outcome that no member of this Legislature wants.

Another troubling pattern with the Liberals' plan so far is that the worst drivers in the province are the ones on the receiving end of the largest discounts. In the most recent premium filings it was found that three companies that write insurance policies solely for people with drunk driving convictions and multiple accidents had the biggest reductions. These reductions were 15%, 14.5% and 8.7% respectively. These drivers rightly pay the highest rates, and the government is allowing convicted drivers to get a break on their premiums and get a big discount in order to inflate the average reduction so that it looks like auto insurance rates are coming down more than what they actually are.

This is what causes many people to get upset and call their local MPP. I get lots of calls, and I'm sure each member of this Legislature can provide an example or two or three of constituents calling them about auto insurance rates.

After many calls for the government to do something, we are now presented with Bill 15. For those keeping score at home, this bill merges Bills 171 and 189 from the previous session and addresses five key priority areas regarding auto insurance right here in Ontario. The Liberals are heralding the bill as part of their cost reduction strategy, as the Minister of Finance might put it, to finally help deliver on their past promises of a 15% cut to insurance rates. Insurance industry insiders are generally supportive of the bill, but many are unconvinced that it will be enough to get the job done. Bill 15 takes a step in the right direction, but at the end of the day, there are few

significant cost savings that will be achieved by this piece of legislation in its current form.

The main components of the bill are reform of the dispute resolution system—a bad idea—prejudgment interest charges, licences for service providers, clarifying the licensing of insurance agents and adjusters, some changes to the Consumer Protection Act for towing providers and, finally, storage and lien reforms. In my opinion, they're trying to combine way too much in this particular bill.

Now, the storage and lien reform component of this bill is meant to cut down on fraud, and that is a goal we support. If passed, Bill 15 would require body shops and tow truck drivers to give notice of vehicles in their possession to the owners of the vehicles in a reasonable amount of time. We support that component.

But one of the larger changes found in this bill is the reform of the dispute resolution system. The bill proposes moving responsibility for the system from the industry-funded Financial Services Commission of Ontario, FSCO, to an existing tribunal administered by the taxpayer-funded Ministry of the Attorney General; specifically, the Licence Appeal Tribunal. The costs of the dispute resolution system will still be there, but they will be taken from your tax dollars instead of your insurance premiums. If you have auto insurance and pay taxes, you're just paying out of a different pocket. When it comes to costs, this is basically a shell game.

To be fair, the government is not trying to sell this as a cost reduction. They are promoting this as a way to cut down on wait times. They argue that moving the dispute resolution system to the Ministry of the Attorney General will help resolve disputes faster than FSCO.

Well, in 2011, the Auditor General stated that the mediation phase was a severe bottleneck that caused a significant delay in the overall process. At that time, there were 30,000 cases in the backlog. They've since been able to whittle that number down to roughly 16,000, but this sizable backlog continues to delay settlements being reached and adds additional costs to the system.

While speeding up the process for individual cases is important, it doesn't get to the heart of the matter. The real problem is the massive queue of cases waiting to be heard. That is where the long wait times come from. A quicker tribunal process helps, but to make a meaningful change, we must address the issue of why so many cases go to dispute in the first place.

We in the PC Party have recommended using existing medical assessment guidelines to have truly independent third-party assessments. This would make injury classifications more black and white as well as eliminate the need for mediation in several cases. We've also recommended giving claimants and insurers the option of using private mediators. This would give claimants more choice and allow them to avoid long wait times while also reducing the number of claims waiting to be heard by the tribunal overall.

It remains to be seen if this bill will be enough to get auto insurance rates down by 15% next year. That's the

danger of making promises with arbitrary and specific numbers. What this bill will do is help push auto insurance premiums down across the province as well as in my great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, and that is certainly something I'm in favour of. In conclusion, Speaker, I support this bill at second reading, and I look forward to it being strengthened through further debate in the Legislature and some friendly amendments in committee.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: First and foremost, I want to make it clear that, as New Democrats, we proudly are not supporting this bill. This bill is named, very conveniently, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways. While the latter portion of the bill makes a lot of sense, the beginning of the bill, “reducing insurance fraud”—I'm very interested to see how the Liberals can convince us that this reduces insurance fraud.

Now, I was present at the anti-fraud task force. They went to some great lengths about what is actually causing fraud, and I'll go into some depth on this. But this bill is going to implement some very minor changes—good changes, but very minor changes—to the storage of vehicles and to the tow trucking industry. That is somehow fighting fraud? I mean, that's a very ambitious title. What this bill is really doing is—I'll rename the bill, the appropriate name: the “putting more money in the pockets of insurance companies bill,” the “bill that does very little to actually guarantee reductions for auto insurance premiums for drivers in Ontario bill,” the “bill that, again, shows the Liberals' priorities, putting insurance companies and profits before the drivers of Ontario.” That's the name of this bill. That's really what this bill is doing.

Why are we voting against this bill? Let me put it to you very simply: This bill strips Ontarians of the right to sue an insurance company if they deny benefits. Let me say that one more time to make it absolutely clear: We're voting against this bill because this bill strips Ontarians of the right to sue insurance companies if they deny benefits to an injured person. How horrible is that? If an insurance company denies benefits to an individual, and you want to sue that insurance company because, hey, you were entitled to those benefits—you've been denied benefits—this bill says, “Hey, you can no longer do that. You can no longer sue an insurance company.” That's unacceptable.

In addition, this bill reduces the interest rates on pre-judgment damages from 5% to 1.3%. What does that do? The Attorney General indicated that that's going to reduce costs and maintain fairness for Ontarians. Well, it's certainly going to reduce costs, but there is absolutely no justification for how that's in any way going to benefit Ontarians.

In fact, what's going to happen is, if an insurance company—at one point, they dealt with 5% interest rates. That meant that if there was a settlement of \$100,000 that they had to pay out to somebody, and they're paying 5% interest on that, it's a pretty big incentive for them to settle that, because they're paying such a high rate of interest. But now, reducing that from 5% to 1.3%, there's absolutely no incentive to settle. Insurance companies can just take that settlement amount—if it's \$100,000, if it's \$200,000, whatever the amount that's owed to the individual or whatever settlement they should be receiving. It's only going to have a 1.3% interest rate, so they can take that money, put it into any investment, beat 1.3% interest and delay the case as long as they want.

We are voting against this bill, again, because it strips the right to sue an insurance company for denying benefits to drivers in Ontario. We're voting against this bill because it puts more money in the pockets of insurance companies but offers no benefit to drivers in Ontario. It reduces the interest rates charged to insurance companies on judgments that they should settle, and instead reduces that so there's not incentive for an insurance company to settle and actually pay an injured person.

We've heard time and time again the concept of taking costs out of the system. I've heard this phrase used time and time again. Now, what does that mean? What you're asking us to believe is that if you reduce costs, if you take down the costs that insurance companies incur, then you're going to translate that into reduced premiums. That's what you're saying, essentially.

Let me give you an example, because one of the best ways to predict the future is to look at the past. So let's look at the past. Now, what was one of the biggest cost reductions that has ever happened in the insurance industry? Well, in 2010, this Liberal government slashed, destroyed, cut benefits to such a colossal degree that in one year alone—when they implemented this in September 2010, a year later, this government reduced the cost of benefit payouts, the cost incurred by insurance companies, the amount of money that they actually pay to people, by 50%. So the insurance industry saved—and they admit this—\$2 billion a year. Now, this savings didn't happen for one year. This didn't happen for two years. This happened forever. Because the changes you implemented put in a cap. The cap is not going anywhere. You saved the insurance industry, every year, \$2 billion—50% of the cost that used to be incurred has been reduced.

Now, you talk about, “We need to take costs out of the system.” You took costs out of the system. Let's look back at history and see what happened. Because you're saying, “Oh, we're going to take the costs out of the system. This is going to benefit drivers because it's going to bring down premiums.” I know that your measures aren't going to reduce the cost by 50%. I challenge you to prove to me that they're going to reduce the cost by 50%, because they're not. You've already done that. You've reduced the costs by 50%: Guess which way the premiums went from that same period of time? Just

guess. Which way are you thinking, down or up? You'd think that the costs went down by 50%, so naturally, the premiums probably went down by a couple per cent. Right? No. They went up by approximately 5%. They went up by 5%. How does that make any sense?

You took costs out of the system by 50%—some \$2 billion—like you always talk about: “Oh, we’ve got to take costs out of the system.” You did that. You took costs out of the system. What happened? Where was the premium reduction for drivers? It didn’t happen. Just like it’s not going to happen this way either. The same thing again. You’re saying, “Oh, we’ve got to take costs out of the system. We’re going reduce the cost to the insurance companies”—i.e., we’re going to put more money in their pockets—and just hope for a reduction down the road.” Well, it’s not going to happen because you’ve shown before that a reduction in costs actually increased our premiums somehow. I wanted to raise that issue.

You talk a lot about fraud and how fraud’s a big deal. Let’s make it very clear: No one is going to say that fraud is a good thing. Obviously, we’re all against fraud. So it’s very tricky that you named your bill fighting insurance fraud. Of course everyone’s against insurance fraud. But let’s actually be somewhat analytical about this issue. Let’s apply some critical thinking—and this is all factual: If the costs to the insurance companies have gone down by 50%—the money that they actually pay out—they’re saving \$2 billion. They claim that fraud accounts for about \$1 billion. Well, if you put a cap in, and 80% of people are only getting \$3,500 in coverage now, you’ve naturally cut out people who are legitimately injured. They’re no longer getting benefits because they’re now being capped. You also cut out a whole chunk of people who were fraudulent as well—naturally. So you talk about reducing fraud, you’ve already reduced both legitimately injured people and the small percentage of people who are actually fraudulent. You’ve already done that. You’ve already tackled it to the highest degree ever in history. Did it result in any savings for drivers? Not really.

Now, again, you’re saying, “You’re working against us.” We’re not working against you. You promised to reduce insurance—your own promise. We asked you to do 15%. You said, “We can’t do 15% in one year; we’ll do it over two years.” Okay; you’re trying to be reasonable. You said, “We’ll do 8% in one year.” Well, you haven’t done 8%. You broke that promise. You’ve only done 6%. And you’re going to come out and say—I’ll predict your answer—“Oh, it’s because you didn’t let this bill pass.” It’s not about this bill, because how much is this really saving? Compare what you’ve done in 2010. You’ve cut the benefits that we receive—colossal cuts to those benefits. You’ve reduced the costs that insurance companies incur. Out of those cost savings you should be able to find a 15% reduction—easily. But you haven’t. You’ve broken your promise.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Several times. Several times.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Several times, in fact. So this is another example of a great PR mechanism. And I have to

applaud you. Whoever works in your public relations department is doing a phenomenal job.

Ms. Catherine Fife: StrategyCorp.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Your strategy is beautiful, but your content is really weak. That’s a problem. I mean, it’s great to be able to make a nice fluffy title, but we’d like to see some content. We’d like to see something that actually helps people.

Interjections.

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Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I would love for anyone on that side of the House to get up and explain to me how you’re fighting fraud by this bill. I’d love for you to show me something else.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That’s a challenge.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I challenge you to show me how you’re fighting fraud. These are the three measures that you’re talking about doing, essentially. Let’s just talk about those measures and if there is any evidentiary basis for your measures, because I like evidence. Blame me. I believe we should have evidence-based decisions instead of emotion-based decisions, instead of confusing-people-based decisions. I believe in evidence. So let’s look at what you’re doing.

Can you tell me what percentage of towing accounts for fraudulent costs in the system? Can you tell me what the number is? What is the impact to the insurance industry on fraud related to the tow truck industry? You can’t; there’s no number for that. You’re not going to be able to show me a number for it. What’s the number? How much of a value is it? You can’t tell me that.

How about the storage? How much do storage costs relate to fraud? What’s the number? What percentage of fraud? What’s the value of the impact to the industry? You can’t tell me that. You’re somehow trying to suggest that some minor changes requiring some notice for storage fees are somehow going to fight fraud? Come on, no one buys that. You’re going to change the tow truck industry by a very insignificant amount, by a little incremental change, and that’s somehow going to tackle fraud? How? Where is the evidence? Has anyone got up and said, “If we do this change to the tow trucking industry, we’re going to reduce fraud by 5%; we’re going to reduce fraud by \$10 million”? You’ve not given one piece of evidence to back up that this is fighting fraud. Show me the evidence. Is there any evidence that you can come forward with that actually supports that this is actually fighting fraud?

On top of that, your other big idea to fight fraud is, “Let’s license insurance adjusters.” The guys that work for the insurance companies: You think that they’re committing fraud? You’re thinking that the insurance industry is committing fraud itself? If it is, how much? Did they provide you with any numbers saying, “Our insurance adjusters are responsible for \$100 million of fraud a year”? You don’t have any numbers to back this up. You don’t have any evidence to back this up. You have no proof to show me that any of these measures will actually reduce fraud in any meaningful way. Where is the evidence?

I can tell you some evidence. Maybe you're not used to evidence; maybe you're not familiar with it. Let me show you some evidence. There is an anti-fraud task force which you commissioned. Your own anti-fraud task force provided three areas where fraud occurs. They said that one is organized crime; the second, they said, was systemic health care providers that were bad operators; and they said that there was some opportunistic fraud related to everyday folks. I asked that anti-fraud task force chairperson, "What is the most significant? First of all, how much does this total to?" The individual was not able to say how much it cost. He could not say the total amount of fraud that all this accounted for, but he was able to say that organized crime and systemic health care providers were the major ones. Okay; there's a little bit of evidence there.

Your attempts here to regulate the tow truck industry, to look at storage and to license insurance adjusters do nothing to tackle the major areas that your own anti-fraud task force talked about. You're not addressing the major areas that your own task force talked about; you're addressing some ancillary, corollary side issues—fine. There's nothing, again, in what you're doing that connects to the major problems that were presented by your own anti-fraud task force, and we already know that when it comes to the health providers, there was a small percentage of them that were perhaps not working in a manner that was appropriate. They've all been dealt with by the fact that you slashed the benefits. People who were legitimately injured, and those who weren't injured and who were fraudulent: All of them have been cut from benefits—blanket. You cut out so many of the costs; where are the premium savings? How do we have any faith that you'll actually do it when you've broken your promise and when this bill has nothing to do with fighting fraud in a significant way? It's incremental; it's minor; it's a passing thought. It's not actually focused on that.

Let's make it very clear that this is the "putting more money in the pockets of insurance companies" bill; that's what it is. This is the "taking away the rights of Ontario drivers" bill. This is the "taking away the rights of injured people in Ontario" bill. That's what your bill is. This is the "stripping the right to sue so insurance companies don't have to provide benefits for people who are injured" bill. That's the bill you're enacting.

So, no, we don't support this bill. You can ask me any time you want, and I'll tell you very proudly and very clearly, "No, I do not support this bill." In fact, in the committee, I thought, "Hey, this bill is in committee. Let's try to make it a bit better." The major problem with this bill is, one, you're stripping the right to sue, so I voted against that part of the amendment. I asked you to put in an exception. In fact, I said, "Okay, if you're not going to honour the fact that people who are denied benefits"—these aren't people who are just walking down the street and saying, "I want to sue an insurance company." These are people who are injured in an automobile accident. After they're injured, they're claiming a benefit. They're saying, "Hey, we need to get a wheel-

chair. We need to get some physiotherapy. We need to get better; we want to get better." The insurance company is supposed to cover that. The insurance company says, "No, we're not going to cover that."

A person, before, could bring a lawsuit and say, "Hey, you're not covering something that I'm entitled to. Let me see if a judge agrees with this. Let me show you the evidence, show you the insurance claim and show you what the insurance says it covers. Let's bring it to a court and get justice." That's called access to justice. What you are doing is, you are stripping people of access to justice. If they've been denied a benefit, they can no longer sue in court.

You talk about, "There is access to justice. You can appeal it; you can do a judicial review." Let's make it very clear. The appeal process and a judicial review are completely different from a regular lawsuit. An appeal means you have to find that there was an error in law. If there was no error in law, if the judge makes or if the tribunal made a decision with no error in law, you can't appeal it then. The burden is much higher. You can bring a lawsuit much easier than you can bring an appeal of a tribunal decision.

Then you talk about a judicial review. A judicial review is even more narrow. A judicial review is, you could have had everything—all the decisions were absolutely wrong, but if due process was followed, there is no judicial review. You can't review that decision if due process was followed. So the tribunal could have done everything right but come out with a completely unfair decision, and there is no judicial review to that.

How is that access to justice? It is not. At least be clear, at least admit, "Hey, you know what? We want to help out the insurance companies. We want them to make more profits, so we're taking away the right to sue." At least be forthright. Admit that you're taking away the right to sue. Admit that you're reducing access to justice. I wouldn't mind it as much. I would mind it personally and I would mind it for the people of Ontario, but at least I could respect that you were being straightforward, that you were telling me exactly what is going on. But when you go in a roundabout way and say, "No, there's still access to justice," that bothers me, because you're not being straight with the people of Ontario. You're not telling them exactly what's in the bill. That's one of the reasons why we have to vote against this bill.

On the interest argument, I can't fathom how you could dare say that this in any way benefits drivers or the victims. How does this benefit them? Reducing the interest rates that are charged to insurance companies on a chunk of money, a settlement that they're entitled to give to an individual—how does that benefit drivers? How can you say that? Don't say that. At least be straight-up and say, "Hey, this is going to help insurance companies. We're going to give them more profits, and we're going to hope"—throw a Hail Mary—"maybe this is going to reduce the cost for drivers." That would be a bit more realistic. You could say, "We're hoping. We think maybe it will possibly happen sometime down the road."

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Maybe.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: With a lot of “maybes.” Then I’d say, “Hey, cool. You’re actually being straight-up with us.” So that’s a problem with the way you’re approaching this bill.

Now, I have to talk about this issue again and make it more clear. In committee hearings, like I said, I voted against taking away the right to sue, but I thought, “At the minimum, if you’re not going to allow people to sue when their benefits are denied, at least recognize that there’s a difference between everyday claimants and those who are catastrophically injured.” So our amendment read—our first approach was to say, “Listen, take that component out of the bill, let people continue to sue, and that would be a somewhat better bill.” You voted against that change.

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We asked for you to create a different category, that folks who are catastrophically injured—these are people who are so desperately injured, so grievously injured, that their lives are completely changed. These are folks who are paraplegic, people who lose functioning in their limbs, people who have had such a devastating injury that they are catastrophically injured and their entire lives are completely changed. For those folks who are so vulnerable, who are so injured—someone who is catastrophically injured—and they’re being denied a claim, at least in those cases, allow that individual to sue the insurance company to get benefits, because that person is in such dire need of help. At least let that person sue.

Guess where you guys voted on that. You voted against it. That would have at least added some fairness into the bill that you acknowledge that if someone is catastrophically injured, if they’re that seriously, grievously injured, they should be entitled to a remedy in court. They should be able to go to court and say, “Hey, this insurance company is denying me the benefit. I don’t get it. They’re not allowing me to pay for a wheelchair” or “They’re not covering this physiotherapy that I need to get better.” At least for those folks, you should have allowed an exception that they could actually sue the insurance companies.

Why have you sold out so much to the insurance companies that you won’t let the people of Ontario bring a claim in court, have their day in court and fight for a little bit of justice? Why wouldn’t you allow it to those catastrophically injured people? That’s pretty bad if you think about it. It’s not fair. Right? At least for those folks, you should allow them to have the right to go to court.

You’ve also done something else that is very important to note. This is another area where this bill is significantly flawed. You cited Justice Cunningham. Justice Cunningham had a report on how to address the auto insurance system. In the report, Justice Cunningham stated a principle. You’ve taken the principle very literally, but you’ve lost the spirit of what Justice Cunningham wanted you to achieve.

Justice Cunningham said that you have FSCO, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, which regu-

lates the auto insurance industry. It also houses the arbitrators who make decisions on cases. Justice Cunningham said it doesn’t make sense to have the same body that regulates make decisions on whether or not someone should be approved for a benefit. True. That makes sense. On a legal principle, you shouldn’t have the same body regulating and also decision-making. So Justice Cunningham’s report said, “Separate them.” That part of it you understood and are applying. You separated those arbitrators out of FSCO and put them into the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

But here is where you made a mistake. If you had kept those same arbitrators, those same trained folks with independence who have a salaried position, who have a wealth of knowledge about how to deal with these cases—if you had kept them and transitioned them to the Licence Appeal Tribunal, that would have been fine. What you’re doing instead is that now you’re getting rid of those experienced tribunal folks, the ones who have a wealth of institutional knowledge, and you’re replacing them with Licence Appeal Tribunal folks who are per diem, who are appointed at the mercy of the minister and are great at doing what they do—which is dealing with tickets, dealing with parking fines, dealing with those types of licence-appeal-related issues—but don’t have any of the knowledge, any of the institutional knowledge, to deal with these complex cases around benefits, negligence and about if the insurance company is entitled to pay or not.

You say that this is somehow making it more fair, that this is somehow making it more efficient. It’s not making it more efficient. When you lose that wealth of knowledge, you’re not actually increasing efficiency. You’re actually decreasing efficiency. You’re actually making it more unfair, because people who are trained, who had knowledge, who had the experience, who had the case law to be able to make a good decision, a reasoned decision are no longer there. That’s a serious problem.

The Attorney General gets up and says this transition from FSCO to the Licence Appeal Tribunal will result in more fairness. No, it won’t. It will create the appearance of fairness, which is what Justice Cunningham wanted, and part of that makes sense. But if you lose the actual decision-makers who have the institutional knowledge, you’re not making it more fair. In fact, you’re probably making it less fair, because people who don’t know how to deal with these cases, who don’t have the experience, who don’t have the institutional knowledge are going to be making decisions.

On top of that, there’s also a question about their independence. Decision-makers need to be independent. Independence is one of the key factors in making sure you have a just system. That’s why judges in Canada aren’t voted in. We select a judge and we want the judge to make a decision based on law and not be subject to the whim of the public, not be subject to the whim of the government of the day and not be subject to the whim of whatever interest group it is. But in this case, you have decision-makers who are appointed, and many of them

are per diem. The decision-making independence of someone who is appointed and per diem versus a salaried individual—there's clearly a difference. You have a salaried, permanent employee making decisions and you have a per diem appointed by the ministry. The appearance of justice—and often it's not necessarily whether there is a bias or not, but whether there's a reasonable apprehension of bias, whether a reasonable person could look at those two scenarios and say, "Well, I could reasonably perceive that there might be a bias in this case, that it may not be as fair." That's a serious problem.

That's another reason why I will proudly, with my colleagues from the NDP and our leader, Andrea Horwath, vote against this bill, because a vote against this bill is a vote for the people of Ontario. We're proud to always stand up for the people of Ontario. We're proud to stand up for justice and fairness, and that's why we're proud to vote against this bill.

We've talked about why we're voting against the bill. We've talked about the idea of reduction of costs. I think we need to just talk a little bit more about the changes to the system and how they've impacted the overall lay of the land.

One of the major problems with this bill, and with, frankly, many of the decisions that you've taken when it comes to the auto insurance regime, is that you continually talk about taking the costs out of the system. That's been your approach: taking costs out of the system. When you bring the costs out of the system, your theory is that costs out of the system mean that premiums will go down. That's your theory. Well, the theory isn't working, because we see that when costs come out of the system, premiums are not going down. Why is that? Because you're not tying the cost reductions to premium reductions. You're not guaranteeing that if there's a cost reduction, that will provide a premium reduction. You're not requiring that the industry actually reduce premiums. If their costs go down, you have to ensure that a cost reduction actually translates to a premium reduction. If you don't ensure that, if there's no guarantee for that, then what faith do the people of Ontario have?

You can talk about fraud reduction all day long; you can talk about cost reduction all day long. If there's no mechanism to guarantee that a cost reduction—that if you save the insurance industry some money, that that's actually going to result in premiums going down. If there's no mechanism to guarantee that, then there's no hope or there's no actual guarantee that this will reduce premiums for drivers. That's one of the biggest problems here. There's no tie-in, there's no guarantee, there's no connection.

That's another reason why we will proudly vote against this bill, because all of these measures are simply implemented with a hope that it will reduce premiums. There's nothing guaranteeing or tying in any of the cost savings with actual reductions.

I guess I should quickly mention the parts of the bill that were non-problematic.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Are there any?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, there are some parts of the bill that are not.

Schedule 1 of the bill, like I said, is tow and storage services. The majority of the tow and storage services component of this bill talks about notice, and the fact that folks should be entitled to notice about where their car has been towed to. The rental agency organization came forward and said that this is a big issue. Cars get towed and they don't know where it is, so they wanted increased notice.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The CAA did too.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The CAA also raised this issue as a significant issue, that they want to know where cars are being towed to. It seems very reasonable. How does that fight fraud? Providing more notice is somewhat fair, but how is that fighting fraud? How is that reducing auto insurance?

There's been a considerable amount of talk about concerns around the tow truck industry. While there are some phenomenal tow truck drivers and organizations that do great work, there are obviously some very troublesome players in this industry as well. I've met with tow truck drivers, and they've said very clearly, "Yes, we have a problem. There are some drivers who are creating a problem for the rest of us. Some of them are engaging in inappropriate activities."

While the tow truck industry definitely needs to be addressed in terms of improving it, one of the things they called for was a province-wide licensing regime, something that would actually be implemented province-wide, because as it currently stands, if you're towing between multiple municipalities, you actually have to carry a different licence for each municipality.

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If you tow someone from the 400 series, from the 401, and you're stuck somewhere in the middle on your way from Toronto to, let's say, Windsor to visit my good colleague from Essex, and you need a tow ride, tow truck drivers have to go through multiple jurisdictions to get there. There is a different licensing regime for each municipality. There's no consistency. Tow truck drivers have complained about that, saying, "Listen, we need a standardized licensing regime for the entire province." This bill doesn't do anything to address that. That would have been something that would have actually improved the tow truck industry and would have provided some standardization for the entire province.

You address tow truck drivers, you address storage, and in addition to that, you have a component of this bill that talks about licensing insurance adjusters. I'm just curious: Where did that component come from? Why is that something that was so important that you thought, in your fighting-fraud legislation, you needed to implement licensing for insurance company adjusters? Perhaps someone could answer that for me when you get a shot.

If you would have taken these three components out, the changes to towing and storage and the licensing of insurance adjusters, and put that into a new bill and renamed that new bill the "very minor, incremental,

insignificant changes to the insurance regime that will somehow help a little bit in tackling some problems that these industries face" bill or act, I would have happily voted for that, because incremental, small changes to help the insurance industry a little bit by addressing small parts of it are fine. There's no real big deal with that. But I have a problem with the component of your bill which is the "putting more money into the pockets of the insurance companies act" and the "denying the right to sue bill." That's a big problem. That's really the crux of the bill. If you really wanted to be serious about addressing the issues and making sure that your bill actually matches up with its name, you could have separated those two out and put two different bills forward. We would have been very happy to support the one and not the other.

Let's look at some of the history of what has gone on in terms of the rates. What I want to break down in terms of the specifics is: When we look at the auto insurance regime and we look at what's going on across the province, we notice that in 2010-11, like I said, there was a big reduction in costs to the insurance industry. We actually followed that reduction from 2011-12 to 2012-13 and we looked at some of the numbers to see, hey—we would assume that the rates would continue as we projected; that the reductions would continue. Guess what? The reductions continued. The cost savings were maintained. By and large, the insurance companies continued to enjoy those cost reductions that they saw in 2011.

Let's tally that up a little bit. If they saved about \$2 billion from 2010 to 2011, another \$2 billion from 2011 to 2012—we're at \$4 billion—and from 2012 to 2013 another \$2 billion, we're at \$6 billion of savings. Wow; that's a lot of savings for one industry. We'll look forward to seeing the 2014 numbers when the year ends, and we're probably going to see the same thing. So you have, every year after your 2010 changes—let's call them what they are: the 2010 benefits slashing. Every year, the insurance industry has continued to see its costs stay at that level of \$2 billion less than they were prior to the changes. So they've maintained that reduction.

Let's look at something called the loss ratio. The loss ratio is what insurance companies talk about at the end of the day. They say, "Listen, we need to make a profit." Sure. We live in a society where we want to ensure that companies make a profit. That's what makes them exist. But here's the big difference: This is a product that you have to purchase by law. The government mandates that people have to purchase auto insurance. It's like owning a restaurant that everyone has to dine at. You have to go to that restaurant. If you make it a law to go to that restaurant, you'd better also make it affordable and fair to go to it. It's similar with auto insurance. If you make it a law that you have to have auto insurance, you've got to make it affordable. You have to ensure that it's fair. Otherwise, you've just created a really unfair system where you've made sure that the suppliers will get that sale. You've made sure the industry is going to get that

sale, but you haven't made sure they do that sale in a fair way. That's why you regulate auto insurance, because it's mandatory. But if you're regulating something that's mandatory, you have to make it affordable.

What is the way to measure if something is affordable or not? One way to do that: The insurance industry has premiums that are coming in—that's the payments they receive—and they have costs going out. Those are the benefits they pay out. It's pretty straightforward. On top of that, insurance companies have some other costs associated with their buildings, their staff and their other running costs. If you add up the running costs and expenses in total, add in the costs in terms of the payouts and compare that to the premiums, you get the loss ratio.

What do you guys think the loss ratio is? Do you think insurance companies are making money or losing money? What's your guess? Do you guys have a guess? Hey, how about I help you out?

They're making money. Their loss ratios are not in the negative. No sirree. They are not in the negative at all. Insurance companies in this province are posting some of the best loss ratios they've ever seen. Their loss ratios are excellent, meaning they are taking more money in than they're paying out. Awesome. They're taking in more money than they're paying out.

On top of that, they make money on their investment income. Imagine this: The insurance industry is one of the only industries where you pay them monthly and get nothing for it. If you don't make a claim, you don't get anything. If you pay them every month for a year, they take the money that they're entitled to and they're not actually paying you anything for it. What do they do with that money? Well, they take that money and invest it. It's a great business scheme, if you think about it. They're getting paid month after month and you, the consumer, are not getting anything for that. You're just getting the protection, but you're not actually getting anything paid out to you.

So the insurance industry takes the money that they get rightfully—I mean, they're entitled to it—and they invest it and then they make investment income. Do you think they're making money on their investment income? Yes, they are. So they make money on their investment income, and they make money on their loss ratio—the premiums coming in versus the costs going out. They're making money on both sides. Both of those are in the plus. So they're making good profits.

Now, you would think, "Hey, I'm the government. I want to regulate this industry. How would I do that?" You should know what their profits are. Does this government have a fair and clear handle on the profits? They don't. I implore you: If you want to regulate this industry, you need to know how much they're making. You need to know their profits. If you don't have a handle on the profits, how can you effectively regulate?

If one accountant says the insurance industry is making approximately \$500 million in profits, and another one, using the same numbers, says it's making \$300 million, that's a \$200-million difference. That's

what we saw: Two different accounting firms came up with two numbers, in terms of profits, that were hundreds of millions of dollars different. They couldn't even agree on the profits. So if we want to be serious about regulating this industry, we need to make sure we have a fair handle on the profits.

I want to summarize really quickly now, in a short manner, why we're not supporting this bill—let's make this really clear. This bill is entitled the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. This bill does very little to fight fraud and absolutely nothing to guarantee a reduction in auto insurance. What this bill actually does—I want you to all stay with me, because I've said it a couple of times now—is strip the right of auto insurance holders, of drivers in Ontario, to sue insurance companies if their benefits are denied.

This bill reduces the interest rates on pre-judgement settlements, which in effect puts money in the pockets of insurance companies. This bill puts money in the pockets of insurance companies but does not benefit the drivers of Ontario. This bill takes away our right to sue insurance companies when we're wrongfully denied benefits, when we're wrongfully denied what we're entitled to, but does nothing to reduce auto insurance rates. There is no guarantee in this bill that rates will go down.

This is another example of an attempt to reduce costs but no guarantee to reduce premiums. You're putting more profits in for the insurance companies, but what are you doing for the drivers of Ontario? Nothing. This bill is another way of giving a big handout to the insurance industry but not putting the needs of drivers first.

We know that drivers in this province are paying the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country. We know that certain regions in a small area, like Toronto, are being charged disproportionately for where they live. There's so much unfairness, and this bill does nothing to address that unfairness. That's why we're voting against this bill, and I'm proud to do so.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Chatham—Kent—Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I chose not to interrupt the previous speaker in his debate, but I would like to correct my record. In my previous debate, I had stated "second reading," and I want to correct the record. It is, in fact, third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member has the right, at any time, to correct his record. Thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm speaking today on behalf of my minister at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and on behalf of the Ministries of Transportation and Finance.

I rise today for the third reading of Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014. This legislation in fact does propose important measures that will help protect Ontario drivers, tackle fraud and abuse, and reduce costs and uncertainty in

Ontario's auto insurance market. Bill 15 is a combination of two pieces of legislation that died on the order paper when the 40th Parliament of Ontario was dissolved, and one wonders how far we would be towards that 15% savings if both those pieces had been allowed to live.

Our government made a commitment to the more than nine million drivers in Ontario to make auto insurance more affordable, while keeping the system fair and reliable. Bill 15 is the next step in keeping that commitment. Bill 15 proposes significant measures that continue our government's crackdown on fraud and abuse in the auto insurance system.

According to the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force in its 2010 report, fraud and abuse in the Ontario auto insurance system was estimated to cost between \$768 million and \$1.56 billion. That means hard-working Ontario drivers were paying, on average, between \$116 and \$236 to cover the cost of fraud and abuse. That simply is not acceptable. Ontario drivers deserve better. From these 2010 findings, it's not surprising the task force concluded that auto insurance fraud and abuse is substantial and indeed has a significant impact on premiums.

Our government is doing its part. So far, we have taken action to address more than half of the task force recommendations, and we're committed to addressing more recommendations in the coming months while also encouraging others to take action on proposals outside the government's control.

An area of concern to the anti-fraud task force was the vehicle towing and storage industries. The task force heard from many with concerns about organized auto insurance fraud originating at collisions, with unscrupulous tow truck operators taking advantage of drivers involved in these collisions. Most in the industry are law-abiding citizens, providing much needed service, but there are problems with some individuals. I want to reference the words of the task force in its final report:

"As we became more familiar with the issues and the existing regulatory framework, it became apparent that concerns about the current state of the industry were much broader than auto insurance fraud, and included:

—road safety concerns...;

—consumer protection concerns ... and

—mechanical, operating and employee training concerns...."

As a result of these findings, the task force recommended a province-wide licensing scheme for the towing industry, as well as the need to address fraudulent practices, road safety and consumer protection issues. The task force also recommended amending the Repair and Storage Liens Act "to reduce unreasonable storage costs for vehicles damaged in a collision."

If passed, the measures proposed in Bill 15 will help Ontario drivers make informed decisions when getting their vehicle towed or having it held in a storage facility. The proposed changes would require tow and storage providers to have permission from a consumer or someone acting on behalf of the consumer before charging for

towing and storage services; make their rates publicly available; provide an itemized invoice listing services and total cost before demanding or receiving payment; accept alternative forms of payment, such as payment by credit card; and give a consumer access to their towed vehicle to remove any personal property contained in that vehicle, such as a purse or a briefcase.

The new legislation would allow us to set qualifications and standards governing the operation and use of tow trucks, including driver certification and training requirements. The new legislation would also prescribe penalties for violators.

If passed, the amendments proposed by Bill 15 would help address the task force's concern about towing, reduce abusive storage practices and remove associated costs from the auto insurance system.

By continuing the crackdown on fraud and abuse, Ontario is seeing results in protecting consumers and reducing costs in the auto insurance system. From August 2013 to August 2014, for example, auto insurance rates dropped by an average of over 6% across the province. In my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, we saw that happen. While we're pleased with this reduction, we're still focused on our 15% average rate reduction target, and we're determined to get there.

Mr. Speaker, if passed, Bill 15 would build on the work done to stabilize and bring down auto insurance rates for Ontario drivers. Previous reforms streamlined the system, gave consumers more choice in their auto insurance policies and cracked down on fraud and abuse. The legislation we're proposing now would continue to fight against fraud and improve consumer protection. We all want a strong, fair, reliable auto insurance system. Ontario drivers deserve nothing less.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Grant Crack): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It is a pleasure to speak about auto insurance in Ontario and ways to fix a system that has been driving up premiums for decades.

In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, car ownership isn't just an option; it's a necessity. Half of our population is rural and needs to commute to either Cornwall or Ottawa to work. In the city of Cornwall itself, the transit infrastructure is in need of expansion in order to improve residents' access to the city's businesses and services. We receive, however, a fraction of the gas tax collected in the region. Therefore, city residents find a car necessary to access goods and services when they need them.

We're discussing the provision of a product that is both mandatory and necessary, for in Ontario you cannot drive without auto insurance, period. By extension, most residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry can't live or work in the region without an auto insurance policy because they have to drive.

Let's begin by examining what this government has done with auto insurance. I think everybody here will remember, back in 2003, the Liberal government promising to freeze auto insurance rates if they got elected. Of

course, that was one of the first promises broken, along with promises of no tax increases and not running a deficit.

A couple of years ago, in their push to stay in power and promise Ontarians some financial relief, they announced an imminent 15% premium cut. Although this was done to cement NDP support in an upcoming budget, it did little for law-abiding drivers across the province.

The 2013 budget created a framework in which certain policies of certain insurers would be reviewed with the aim of bringing premiums down on average across the province. What the government failed to disclose to Ontarians was that if half the province saved 30% and the other half saved nothing, the policy commitment would still hold.

Many local residents came to my constituency office complaining about their insurance premiums not being cut. Although eastern Ontario premiums tend to be lower than the GTA's, the promised 15% savings were still a considerable help to families' budgets. After grasping the details of the government's rate reduction initiative, they were of course disappointed. They resented being led by Liberal spin to believe that relief was coming.

This Liberal government has made an art of raising hopes and crushing them shortly after. The government's approach has so far yielded the best results for bad drivers. Insurers specializing in uninsured motorists have made significant decreases in their premiums. This may not have been the intended outcome to the government's effort, but it's the reality that we have to contend with.

Clients and stakeholders have seen other insurance-product premiums creeping higher, such as home and life insurance. It is imperative to get this right. Some insurers have already left the Ontario market, citing difficulty in operating in the auto sector. When you use a blunt instrument such as the promise of an across-the-board 15% cut, without any effort to tackle claim costs and fraud, you have created artificial losses for all the players.

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Those whose business model focuses on consumer value and the lowest possible rate will be damaged the most, as their operations won't allow them to absorb a rate cut of that magnitude. Simply, supply will dwindle, destroying the chances of seeing real, meaningful price competition amongst rival insurers.

The government's efforts to bring down prices without tackling costs have also resulted in Ontarians' coverage being dropped when their policies were up for new renewal. This same principle would apply to us as financial consumers. If the government regulated down the maximum interest that a bond could pay, we would naturally move our savings to a lower-risk debt at the same rate. The government's initiative has not reduced our chances of costing the insurer a significant amount for a claim.

The bill is a very small step in the right direction, but it does not tackle the rigidity of the insurance rate-setting mechanisms. The amount of regulation involved in altering rates is mind-boggling, and the process takes almost a

year to complete. This has created a very rigid market, where all players are apprehensive about bringing down premiums. In the case of a sudden spike in costs, such as more claims or higher claim costs, the costs could be significant. The government's attitude to discussion and feedback on this bill, reducing public input to a token formality, also shows that they're not interested in addressing the bottleneck any time soon.

The Ontario PC caucus had proposed an easier-to-understand system, where insurers could notify FSCO of rate changes and use them while they awaited a commission response. This would allow rates to come down faster while keeping FSCO's review and oversight powers. Simply put, if landlords were subject to the same rent-setting mechanism as auto insurers, our rental market would evaporate. We need clear guidelines and strong oversight by FSCO. But our insurance providers must be able to set their rates quickly and deliver savings to consumers.

One of the most upsetting aspects of the auto insurance market today is the large caseload for dispute resolution. We have too many claims in Ontario that end up being disputed in various courts and tribunals. This hurts consumers who are dealing with the medical and financial consequences of an accident. The distress of repeated reviews, medical visits, legal paperwork and waiting for a final settlement is an unfair burden placed on those whom the system should be protecting in the first place.

Bill 15 moves some dispute resolution to another forum, which may help address the tens of thousands of backlogged cases currently before FSCO. However, moving disputes from an industry-funded tribunal to a taxpayer-funded one is a shell game unless the causes of so many disputes are eliminated. Saving on premiums only to pay higher taxes or receive less government service delivers no tangible benefits to Ontarians.

This bill implements changes to the licensing of health facilities that provide services to accident victims. This section is designed to hold those providers who over-billed insurers and drove up claim costs to account. Their bad practices caused premiums to rise for everyone. While we agree that the clinics must be held accountable for services and practices, additional paperwork is not the only way to achieve this. We have proposed that government instead create a framework whereby medical professionals in the clinics would be accountable to the regulatory body. This would cut through the red tape while ensuring bad players lost their licence to practise their profession altogether, not just the licence to do business. However, the government didn't incorporate this proposal into the bill.

It is clear that the auto insurance market in Ontario needs fixing. Government regulation has not brought premiums down, and has created a system where bad drivers are rewarded and good drivers foot the bill. This has to change. However, government baby steps in this direction fall very short of Ontarians' expectations. We could have done more and we could have done better, if

only we had just listened to consumers, insurers, service providers and their own hand-picked task force experts whose recommendations are still, for the most part, shelved.

Speaker, while we support this bill in principle, we asked that public consultation be set up to allow us to hear from industry stakeholders. For instance, tow truck operators in my riding asked for changes. For the most part, they just asked to be heard. The issues between the tow truck operators in Toronto and my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry are very different. Unfortunately, this bill does not address them. It doesn't solve the problems of my stakeholders, who came in just last week to talk about the issues of tow truck operations in the Cornwall area. Unfortunately, we must settle for a bill that only has part of what Ontarians need. It's time to put the people of Ontario first.

Kind of a funny issue: We were looking through some instances when I was working on this bill, and going back to that promise in 2013—a colleague here asked that I go to Google to look for the promise that McGuinty broke. Unfortunately, so many promises came up, I couldn't find the one that I needed, so I had to go with some generalities around the taxpayer—and that was one of their first and most highlighted changes to insurance. They put that promise in that they would immediately freeze rates. I remember, back in 2003, my insurance rates going up and phoning the insurance company and them saying, "Yup, we're ready for this legislation, and if it comes through, we'll roll the rates back." Of course, that never happened.

Here we are, 11 years later, and we're still dealing with the same problem. This is a government of inaction: promises made, promises broken. One of the issues with the tax freeze—I was having a problem because it was re-promised in 2007—they're saying that now that they knew the state of the economy, the state of the deficit, that they would be better suited to handling the deficit. Of course, now we know what's happened. It has almost doubled since 2007.

So we're looking forward to some changes to this. We're hearing that most of the recommendations by the government's own expert panel have not been dealt with yet. It's unfortunate. There's no explanation for why they aren't being dealt with. There are some important issues that the insurers are looking for in this bill, and we'll support it. But we're also going to look for some of the changes. With this time allocation motion before us, it did not allow some of the important stakeholders in my riding—I mean, they aren't in and around Toronto; they can't just leave their businesses and get up here. They weren't able, with the short time allowed, to be heard.

Unfortunately, some of these changes will be detrimental and they will restrict the availability of tow truck facilities in my riding. I think they need to be heard. They tend to be small operators. They aren't large companies that you might see up here on the 401. There needs to be some rules in place to make it fair. But they are different in small-town Ontario. Again, this government's lack of

ability to listen to rural Ontario is reflected in the electoral map. When you look at it, outside of Toronto, the map is blue, and to the north it's orange. That's because this is a government that has done, strategically, what it has to do to retain power, but it hasn't looked after the needs of all of Ontario.

Anyway, I'm pleased to talk about this bill. I am looking forward to future changes that are promised. Again, we'll see if those promises come through. We're not holding our breath on this side. We need some of these changes that are in this bill, but we need more.

Thank you, Speaker. I look forward to hearing the rest of the discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have a few minutes in which to make some comments with regard to Bill 15 in its third reading. I think it's really important for people to understand a little bit more of the background to Bill 15 than perhaps we would normally include in debate. It represents the bringing together of two bills: Bill 171, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, and Bill 189, the Roadside Assistance Protection Act. These numbers were assigned to these two bills prior to the last election. A week before the writ dropped, Bill 171, the insurance rates issue, was before the general government committee. It had sort of sprung to life. It was organized as a single bill, as was Bill 189, the Roadside Assistance Protection Act. It had been introduced two weeks before the writ dropped. The idea, then, obviously, in the mind of the government, was that these were two separate legislative initiatives that were better presented as individual bills.

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The other thing to keep in mind is that Bill 171 reflected work that had been done back in 2012 with the anti-fraud task force. I remember that there was quite a lot of discussion at the time by the task force on trying to ferret out what were the reasonable parts of normal insurance and where there were issues that fraud was taking place. It was driven by the fact that people recognized that the insurance rates that Ontario drivers and sometimes geographically smaller groups than that—individual parts of the province had much higher insurance rates than other parts. That sort of triggered this anti-fraud task force. I want to give you a sense of that. That was back in 2012, and there were some key political ideas that were presented there.

As we came closer, there was also a deal with the NDP with regard to the budget of 2013. They wanted a commitment in there that there would be a 15% drop in the cost of insurance rates. I think there's a fundamental lack of understanding that we're talking about private sector insurance companies. The government agreed that it would provide for the 15% decrease, and that meant that the minority government would survive another year, as it turned out, by this deal, because the NDP would vote for the arrangement that the Liberals had provided.

We fast-forward to after the election, this summer. We were greeted, then, on the legislative agenda, with Bill

15. Bill 15 was these two bills put together. Not only was the process hastened by putting them together—obviously, one pass through the legislative process instead of two separate journeys—but it became very obvious that the government's view was that the time was up. So Bill 15 was treated to a time allocation motion which simply said that after six and a half hours of debate, the question would be put and this would move on. I think, actually, in the whole process there were something like 15 speakers out of 106.

Part of this time allocation motion, then, also included what would happen when the bill went to committee. When the bill went to committee, the public had four days' warning and four hours of hearings. Let me just explain what that means. There was a decision made four days before the actual hearing date, so people had four days in which to find out about it and respond. The amount of time was two hours in the afternoon and two hours in the evening. That was it. The deputants who wished to come forward had four days' warning, and it was a question of first-come, first-served.

People, I know, in my riding were very interested in the original Roadside Assistance Protection Act, and they were waiting for that bill to come. As I say, it was introduced a couple of weeks before the writ was dropped, and so I had to explain to them that that was the end of the process and it would have to start up again. I didn't realize that it would be starting up again as part of Bill 15.

When I call my independent tow truck owners, they don't have the ability to drop everything and drive to Toronto, and they do need more than four days' warning, or they need an opportunity to talk to the members of their associations and things like that, to be able to come together and know how they want to respond to the problems.

In the role of the opposition, obviously the most important thing is to be able to ensure that the process is fair for people, because, obviously, whatever the government of the day puts forward, there are always going to be other issues, other ways of looking at it, whatever is the content of the bill—and how it affects people and who hasn't been heard. In fact, the government has, right up on the top corner, by its gallery, a message, which is, "Hear the other side." That's exactly what the opposition's role is: to make sure that the government hears the other side.

When the time allocation bill was being debated, we raised the issue, certainly, of the limited number of hours given over to the hearings. Remember that this is a bill that is two bills that have come together and two bills that each deserve some kind of process of public hearing. Certainly, the insurance side of the bill has some complicated issues, most of which I will not get time to mention. But each bill on its own had enough to warrant a more fulsome opportunity for people to come.

What happens now, as we wind down the debate on third reading, is that much is left to regulation. I think people need to understand that when we are in the public

eye and able to debate a bill, it's a very different story when it goes to the question of the details of how it will be implemented, and those details are worked out and identified as regulations. The regulations are done by consultation, at the whim of the government, and it will include people who are invited to come and offer input into that process. So it's a very different process than the one that takes place here in the chamber. I think that people naturally have some apprehension about the kind of role that those regulations will have and how, at the end of the day, it's going to affect them.

1730

I think I have a few moments to look at one example of the kind of thing that still becomes an issue with this bill, and that is the question of the raising or lowering of insurance rates. This is overseen by the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, which I will refer to as FSCO. The insurance industry has to identify and apply for a reduction or an increase in auto insurance. What this means, to be clear, is that an insurance company cannot raise or lower their own rate to their customers without getting approval from a government agency. But that's not, by itself, the crux of the problem. The problem, says the industry, is the unreasonable time it takes to receive an approval from the government-run FSCO. It usually takes between six months and one year for a rate change application to be ruled on. This is totally unacceptable, and this bill does little or nothing to change that.

Insurance companies are forced to project what they want their rate to be in six months' or a year's time. They're not able to respond to market forces, as can other types of private sector companies. To apply for an increase in the insurance rate, the rate applied for must include all the increases the company would like to be allowed to charge its customers as far as a year in the future. This results in the insurance company applying for a higher rate than they would like to charge when they made the application in order to protect the business from market forces it may encounter down the road. The company needs to do this to keep itself viable. An insurance company cannot take a chance on having a rate too low for a significant length of time, or bankruptcy looms. The snail's pace that FSCO operates at has the effect of inspiring higher rates.

Conversely, FSCO's rate approval process provides a disincentive for insurance companies to lower rates. If a rate reduction is applied for on the basis of current market forces that a company may wish to respond to, the company risks receiving rate approval too late. To mitigate this risk, companies do not apply for reductions.

You can just get a sense from this that it's no wonder Ontario has some of the highest auto insurance rates in Canada.

The other part of this is to demonstrate the importance of being able to have a process of more fulsome debate and the committee hearing process to provide people with an opportunity to look at the parts of the bill that affect them. I think that one of the problems that we have to recognize is that this bill has been put through with

this kind of speed and it's going to be up to the work done after the bill has passed, when the regulations are created and come into force. It's at that time that we'll really see how well this process has worked, as we look at some of the limitations that are presented by this bill.

Having said that, however, I would also say that we agree that while this is not the perfect bill, it does move some of the issues forward by passing this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Pursuant to the order of the House of October 29, 2014, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe we have a deferral. "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 15 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, November 20, 2014."

Third reading vote deferred.

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 18, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): When Bill 7 was last before this House, the member for Wellington-Halton Hills had the floor. I recognize the member from Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Before I was so rudely interrupted yesterday, I was giving my presentation on second reading of Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the leadoff speech for each political party allows, and the standing orders provide for, an hour presentation. I had a chance to speak for about 25 minutes

yesterday on this bill, and now that the government has called Bill 7 for debate this afternoon, I still have the floor, and I'm glad to continue my comments and my remarks on this particular bill.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this bill was first introduced by the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure on July 7 when this House sat in its special summer sitting following the provincial election that took place in June. We have been now debating this for over a couple of days, and I gather the government wants to call it again for debate tomorrow, so they are proceeding with this debate.

It is an important debate, broadly speaking, because we're discussing the issue of economic competitiveness. This bill has two schedules, so it's kind of like a mini-omnibus bill. It's not very long. It's only six pages, but there are two schedules that are somewhat related but very different. The first schedule is the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014, and the second schedule is the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first schedule, of course, requires the Minister of Economic Development to provide an annual report on what the government is doing to reduce so-called burdens affecting small business. I wanted to also point out the fact that I had a chance to speak to the Minister of Transportation today on a very important issue involving my riding, involving the economic competitiveness of my riding—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton are having fun over there. Would you like to go outside and have fun, please? Thanks.

Continue.

Mr. Ted Arnott: We need the government to put the Highway 6 Morriston bypass project on the ministry's five-year plan for new construction. This is an important issue in terms of economic competitiveness for my riding, and I just wanted to thank the minister for listening attentively to my most recent pitch. I want to talk about that a little later, but again, I wanted to thank the minister for his interest in this issue so far, but we need his follow-up and his action to place that project on the five-year plan for new construction, which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is called the Southern Highways Program.

But I digress, so I will return to the bill. Again, schedule 1 forces the minister to publish an annual report with respect to actions taken by the government of Ontario to reduce burdens or, as we sometimes call it, red tape. This report, we maintain, is something that is probably in the public interest. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has encouraged the government to do this. But as far as I know, I don't think the minister has to pass legislation to do this. Obviously, the minister will be compelled to do this on an annual basis if Bill 7

passes in its current form, but to suggest that he needs this legislation in order to release this report is, quite frankly, a stretch, Mr. Speaker.

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The other concern that we've talked about and I talked about yesterday is the fact that while the government would be compelled to release this report on the burdens, there's no requirement upon the government to do anything about it. That's what we'd like to see: a commitment on the government's part to actually reduce red tape—not just to quantify it, not just to talk about it, not just to release a report about it, but to reduce unnecessary regulations and red tape. That is our challenge to the government.

Schedule 2, of course, states that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure would prepare plans with respect to the development of economic clusters. Again, that is something that is well and good as far as it goes, but we don't believe that it is necessary to bring in legislation to compel the government to take this approach, yet the government brings forward these two schedules in the form of a bill.

In greater detail, the proposed Better Business Climate Act, 2014, if passed, would enact two acts: the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014, and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

The proposed Burden Reduction Reporting Act would require the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to annually publish a report with respect to actions taken by the government to reduce said burdens.

Section 1 of the proposed legislation sets out certain definitions. This section defines “burden” as “a cost that may be measured in terms of money, time or resources and is considered by the minister in consultation with other members of the government of Ontario to be unnecessary to achieve the purpose of the statutory, regulatory, procedural, administrative or other requirement that creates the cost....”

Section 2 sets out the requirement to publish this annual report that I referred to earlier and sets out how the minister may provide the report to the public.

Section 3 provides the minister the authority to make certain regulations, including regulations that specify any actions to reduce burdens that may be referred to in the report, and regulations that prescribe the manner in which the minister must evaluate, quantify or describe actions of the government of Ontario in the report.

The Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, the second schedule of the bill: The proposed Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, would enable the minister to prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters and would also impose certain obligations on the minister with respect to the preparation and review of such plans.

Section 1 of the proposed legislation sets out certain definitions, including that “cluster” means “a geographically concentrated group of interconnected businesses and related entities....”

Section 2 provides that the minister may prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters.

Section 3 requires that any plan with respect to the development of a cluster shall include certain information, including: a description of the cluster; an assessment of challenges and opportunities with respect to the development of the cluster; the objectives and intended outcomes of the plan; performance measures to be used to evaluate the plan; and a description of actions that could be taken by the minister, or the businesses or entities that form the cluster, to achieve the objectives and intended outcomes of the plan.

Section 4 requires the minister to make public a draft plan, consult in respect of the draft plan and then make a final version of the plan public.

Section 5 enables the minister to make amendments to the plan at any time by making public the intended plan along with an explanation of the purpose of the amendments.

Section 6 enables the minister to revoke the plan at any time by making public the minister's decision.

Section 7 requires the minister to conduct a review of the plan within five years of the date the minister made the plan public. In conducting the review, the minister would have to evaluate whether the objectives and intended outcomes of the plan had been met, consult, and make public a report summarizing the review, which states whether the plan was being revoked or continued. If the plan was continued, the minister would have to conduct another review within five years.

Section 8 sets out how documents may be made public.

Section 9 enables the minister to make regulations prescribing additional requirements regarding the plan with respect to the development of clusters.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the information I just presented comes directly from the government—the compendium notes that went with the bill.

I also want to express my appreciation to the minister's staff for allowing me to be briefed on this bill back in July, on July 16, when we had the opportunity to have the briefing. More recently, I've been approached by ministry staff yet again to be briefed yet again. I've responded indicating some times next week. Unfortunately, it would be better to be briefed on the bill before making the presentation in the House, but at the same time, I do appreciate the willingness of the minister's staff to fully brief our caucus on this bill.

I've also had a chance to discuss it with members of the senior leadership team of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Of course, as the minister pointed out when he led off the debate, and as well I think his parliamentary assistant mentioned, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business were here yesterday. They do support the bill because they believe that the government is responding to their urging and their request with respect to the first schedule of the bill.

I think it's also important to point out that the CFIB, for many, many years, has been concerned about excessive red tape and regulation. I talked about that a bit yesterday. In my conversations with small business

people through the 24 years that I've been privileged to serve in the Legislature, the vast majority of small business people just want to serve their customers and want to expand their customer base so as to be able to make money and employ people. That's the mission of the entrepreneur. That is in turn what motivates the vast majority of them. They're good people in our communities.

It's also true to point out, I believe, that, coming out of an economic downturn, the vast majority of new jobs that are created in our economy historically—and again, I think, confirmed by recent numbers after the economic downturn that we experienced in 2008-09—between 65% and 80% of the new jobs that are created tend to be created by small business. So this is the most dynamic sector of the economy. This is the sector of the economy that's in all our ridings. I think we need to pay heed and listen to the small business people. I know that you would agree, Mr. Speaker, with the focus of your party on small business issues.

The fact is, the CFIB has presented a number of suggestions and recommendations with respect to red tape reduction for 2014, and they've put this case to the government. They asked that there be legislation introduced on regulation accountability. The specific request of the CFIB was that the government should introduce legislation with requirements to publicly report and measure the impact of regulatory compliance on a regular basis, making it harder for future governments to abandon public accountability. Such legislation was passed in both BC and Saskatchewan. The legislation should also prescribe regulatory reduction targets to ensure that there is zero net growth, helping to reinforce the one-to-two rule whereby for every new regulation, two must be eliminated.

That was the specific request. The government's response, of course, is Bill 7. I would have to say that I don't think anybody looking at this specific request—anybody who is objective, anyway—would conclude that Bill 7 meets the entire request of the CFIB, but certainly the part of that request with the Burden Reduction Reporting Act probably has been responded to. Certainly we would encourage the government to do more in that respect to respond to the specific suggestion and recommendation of the CFIB. We hope to do that if this bill passes second reading and if it, indeed, goes to a standing committee of the Legislature. I hope, if it does pass, that the government will allow for some public hearings on this bill so that we can refine it, improve it, strengthen it. Again, I think the CFIB and other groups would probably have a sincere interest in coming to committee and making recommendations for improvements. We certainly hope that that can happen.

Another recommendation that the CFIB has made to the government this year is to "fully implement the regular review of high-impact regulations to ensure that regulations keep up with changing financial and political circumstances. They must be reviewed regularly to assess their impact and applicability. The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment has taken strides

in implementing regular reviews of high-impact regulations, but we encourage the ministry to fully implement this measure across all of government.”

I heard the minister leading off this debate yesterday. I didn't hear him address that recommendation. I would encourage him to do so as this debate unfolds, in some manner at least, and encourage, when we hear comments from other government members that we'll hear more on that. We would encourage the government to have that recommendation in mind as this debate unfolds and try to find ways to strengthen Bill 7 such that that recommendation is reflected.

The third recommendation with respect to red tape reduction: Review the regulatory implementation process at all government agencies and delegated administrative authorities. Agencies and delegated administrative authorities, or DAAs, as they're sometimes called, such as the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, Stewardship Ontario, the Ontario Electronic Stewardship, Ontario Tire Stewardship—all of these organizations bypass the standard regulatory administration process the ministries have to implement in order to introduce regulations.

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Again, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment should take leadership on this issue and ensure that this process is reviewed and streamlined, ensuring that all government entities are subject to the same regulatory implementation process. Again, this is not something that I heard the government talk about yesterday when the minister led off the debate, and we would encourage them to look at it and try to find ways to implement the spirit of this recommendation.

Recommendation number 4 that the CFIB has put to the government this year: Rebrand the online regulatory feedback form and make the tool permanent. At the beginning of this year, the CFIB says, the ministry introduced the regulatory feedback form on a pilot basis and this tool allows business owners and the public to inquire about regulations with the option of receiving a written response from the government. The tool should be rebranded, made permanent, and a communication strategy should be established to promote it going forward. In addition, all ministry department and agency contact pages should have a link to the form and most frequently asked questions should be fed back into the one-window FAQs.

Again, it's a sensible recommendation by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that makes sense, I think, to a lot of us. It would no doubt have come from their membership and been evaluated and streamlined and brought forward and presented to the government. We would hope that the government will indeed give it some consideration and try to find a way to ensure that the spirit of that recommendation is included in Bill 7.

Improve services through bizpal.ca: BizPal provides business owners with information on permits, licences, permissions, approvals, registration, certifications and other requirements needed to establish and run a business in Ontario. While this service somewhat simplifies complying with government regulations, it could also

benefit from further improvements. The CFIB says, for example, that currently, applications are not available online for most permits and licences. Surely in the 21st century we can find a way to have those applications made online. Business owners are also required to submit forms to various locations: “We recommend streamlining the applications process and allowing business owners to submit forms and payments online.”

Again, in 2014, the 21st century, surely we can find a way to use the latest technology to streamline the process for small business people with respect to this recommendation.

Again, these are good ideas from the CFIB. While at the same time they have given their indication of support for this bill, they've got a lot of other recommendations. We would encourage the government to consider them and pay heed to them, and not just congratulate itself and pat itself on the back for bringing in Bill 7, which is only covering a part of the first recommendation, not the whole of it. There's much, much more work to do.

Earlier, when the Minister of Transportation was still here, I tried to point out and again reemphasize the importance of the Highway 6 Morriston bypass. Of course, the government would have us believe this whole bill, Bill 7, is about enhancing the economic competitiveness of our province, strengthening our economy. That's what the minister would have us believe. I submit that one of the most important projects for strengthening the economic competitiveness, not just of my riding but a whole part of the province, including the city of Hamilton and the Niagara region, is to eliminate the traffic bottleneck at Morriston on Highway 6 just south of the 401. There is a proposal that has been talked about now for about 30 years to build a bypass around Morriston to the west of Morriston, from Highway 6 up to the 401. I've been raising this in the House for some time now, in every possible way that I can think of, most recently today, speaking to the Minister of Transportation after question period, and earlier this week speaking to the Premier, trying to impress upon them the importance of this project and asking the project be put on the ministry's five-year plan for new construction, the Southern Highways Program.

In the township of Puslinch, the mayor, Dennis Lever, has responded to a challenge that was issued to him by a former Minister of Transportation. Actually, it was Bob Chiarelli, who at the time was the Minister of Transportation, and who, in a meeting that we had a couple of years ago—maybe three years ago—said to the mayor, “If you want this project to move forward, you've got to get the business community and other local community organizations to speak up.”

Well, the mayor took him up on that challenge and they have put together something called the Morriston Bypass Coalition, which includes the city of Hamilton, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, the city of Guelph, Guelph Chamber of Commerce, the county of Wellington, the township of Puslinch and big companies like Con Cast Pipe, Sleeman, Canada Bread, Nestlé Waters, Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf Foods, Grain Farmers of Ontario,

Cargill and a number of other large community organizations—the Hamilton Port Authority, Hamilton airport—all of these organizations coming together to form the Morriston Bypass Coalition.

This group was here at Queen's Park a few weeks ago and had a number of meetings with senior staff in various ministries.

I know the member for Cambridge is aware of this idea too, and I appreciate her listening to it.

The fact is, there's a large group of people who are coming together to push the government to get this on the five-year plan, and I am certainly delighted to support their efforts and will continue to do so.

As I said, I had the chance to speak to the Premier this week and, earlier today, with the Minister of Transportation. We know that the minister told us at the estimates committee that the five-year plan for new construction is going to be finalized and released soon. So we're putting

on this full-court press to try to get the government to do the right thing this year, get it on the five-year plan, and then of course we would expect to see a time frame for construction. This is important to the economic competitiveness of not just my riding but a large swath of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I see it's fairly close to 6 of the clock, and I think that with the weather out there, we're all anxious as to how we're going to get home. I appreciate you listening to me this afternoon and the indulgence of the other members of the House as we continue this debate on Bill 7.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
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of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 20 November 2014

Jeudi 20 novembre 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When this item of business was last debated, the member from Wellington—Halton Hills had the floor. I recognize the member from Wellington—Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege and an honour to be able to start off the debate today at the Ontario Legislature with the continuing discussion on Bill 7. The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, of course, introduced that bill on July 7, and I'm continuing my leadoff debate on behalf of our Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, the official opposition, in my capacity as critic to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

As we've discussed and established, Bill 7 has two separate schedules, so it's like a mini-omnibus bill. Schedule 1 is the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, and schedule 2 is the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act.

Just to review, schedule 1, the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, requires the minister to publish an annual report on regulation or so-called burden reduction—burdens that the government, I guess, has created for small business. A burden is defined in the bill as a cost that is measured in "money, time or resources and is considered ... unnecessary to achieve the purpose ... that creates the cost." In other words, the government is intending to report on how many unnecessary regulations

they have eliminated. This also permits the minister to make regulations respecting the report, which may itself include regulation.

Schedule 2 to the bill, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, permits the minister to prepare plans with respect to the development of geographical economic clusters. The minister has the authority to consult with those who have an interest in the plan, and amend, review and revoke the plan, if he chooses to do so. The minister can also make regulations about what goes into the plan, and he or she can decide who should be consulted and determines how the plan is reviewed, revoked and made public.

Mr. Speaker, we've said on a number of occasions now, over the course of this debate, we submit and believe that the minister could do both of these things without Bill 7 if he chose to do so. Instead, he's bringing in this bill, which would require him and future Ministers of Economic Development, I guess, to make this annual plan with respect to red tape reduction—although the bill calls it "burdens"—and to develop a cluster plan.

As I say, this is something that the minister could do in both cases, actually, without the necessity of passing Bill 7. Nevertheless, this bill is before the House.

I would again acknowledge that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has indicated to me that they're quite supportive of the bill because they support the first schedule because they believe they've encouraged the government to do this. Again, I would remind the House that the CFIB, for years, has been encouraging the government to reduce regulatory red tape that's unnecessary. We know that small business people continue to express concerns about being encumbered—and in some cases being strangled—by red tape from the provincial government in particular, but other layers of government as well. The fact is every hour that a small business person has to spend dealing with government forms or dealing with what seem to be unnecessary regulations is an hour taken away from what they do best, which is actually servicing their customers and trying to expand their customer base so that the business can grow, so that the business can be profitable and so that the business can hire more people. That is the goal of most small business people, and it's a goal that we understand on this side of the House and that we share. We want to support them every way we can.

I want to again point out the CFIB's additional concerns with respect to red tape. As far as I'm concerned, this Bill 7 does not go anywhere near accomplishing all the requests of the Canadian Federation of Independent

Business in terms of red tape reduction. They've asked for the introduction of regulation on regulatory accountability. Again, the government I'm sure would argue that Bill 7 is a response to that, but CFIB is looking for much more. They're asking for legislation to prescribe regulatory reduction targets to ensure that there is zero net growth in terms of regulations and red tape, helping to reinforce the 1-to-2 rule, whereby for every new regulation affecting small business and tying them up, two regulations would be eliminated.

They've also asked that the government fully implement the regular review of high-impact regulations. They've asked that there be a review of the regulatory implementation process at all government agencies and delegated administrative authorities, DAAs, including organizations and government agencies like the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, Stewardship Ontario, Ontario Electronic Stewardship, Ontario Tire Stewardship and others. The CFIB has also asked the government to rebrand the online regulatory feedback form, make the tool permanent and improve services offered through bizpal.ca.

Again, I would recommend to the minister over the course of this debate that he look at all of these recommendations, not just implementing half of the first one and calling it a success on the part of the government.

But I looked at this bill in the broader sense, and we've talked about it in terms of the economic climate that this bill is being introduced in and also some of the other economic competitiveness challenges that we face in the province of Ontario.

As I've discussed in the past, in our riding we have an issue in terms of traffic congestion through the community of Morriston in Puslinch township. I should really begin by acknowledging and paying tribute to a good friend of mine, the former mayor of Puslinch township, Brad Whitcombe, who passed away tragically this past weekend. Brad was a good friend. He was an outstanding mayor of the township of Puslinch. He was a warden of the county of Wellington. He was really an outstanding community leader in our riding. He passed away so suddenly; it's a shock to all of us. I know that I pass along, certainly, the condolences of my family and of all in the House who knew him. He was a great man.

He advocated for the Morriston bypass very effectively through the years, and I worked with him on this issue. But as we know the Minister of Transportation is in the process of finalizing and preparing the southern highways program, the updated five-year plan for new construction for highways.

I'd like to again put on the record some of the concerns of my community as well as some of the adjacent ridings. We would argue that this is not just an issue for Puslinch township and Wellington county, but it's a huge issue for the Hamilton and Niagara regions because it involves the access of Hamilton traffic to the 401. Obviously the pressure point is in the community of Morriston in Puslinch township, which has become the bottleneck, but at the same time that affects a big part of

the province of Ontario, and I again look to the adjacent MPPs, some of whom are in the House right now. I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs; I appreciate his efforts in the past to advocate for this project. I see the member for Cambridge who is here; I believe she's very supportive as well. We're trying to work to get this on the five-year plan.

The Morriston Bypass Coalition was here in October. They put these facts to the government. A recent University of Waterloo study on the southern Highway 6 corridor estimates that daily commuter traffic is more than 22,500 vehicles annually—that's more than eight million vehicles—and annual commercial traffic is between 930,000 and 1.2 million vehicles.

0910

An analysis of Statistics Canada trucking commodity origin destination data illustrates that the corridor—again, Highway 6 through Puslinch township—is a key link in our trade with the United States, with up to 150 million kilograms of goods being transported to the eastern United States along the route each year. While the posted speed limit on Highway 6 through Morriston is 50 kilometres an hour, the peak speed reached is only 34 kilometres per hour on weekdays between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Mr. Speaker, if you had the opportunity to see this, you wouldn't believe it, because the traffic is sometimes lined up for kilometres and travelling at a snail's pace through this small community.

The Morriston bypass project would alleviate ever-worsening traffic issues in our area, saving local businesses and commuters more than \$15 million a year today and more than \$30 million per year by 2031. The estimated value of commuter traffic and commercial travel time saved during peak periods with the proposed bypass applied to 2011 traffic would be \$15.3 million. By 2031, the annual value of commuter and commercial time saved during peak periods with the proposed bypass is more than \$30 million.

Again, I would suggest that this is important information relevant to the debate of Bill 7, because it deals with economic competitiveness, and certainly the government would argue that Bill 7 is all about trying to make the economy more competitive. We need this project in our riding to make the province more competitive.

Despite the long-acknowledged need for the essential infrastructure by the government, construction of the Morriston bypass is now decades overdue. The province acknowledged the need to reroute Highway 6 more than 30 years ago, following an initial study that began in 1978, and the Morriston bypass project was presented to the Ministry of Transportation going back to 1994.

In January 2009, the Ministry of Transportation received environmental assessment approval for the new route from the Ministry of the Environment. That was after a meeting that we had here at Queen's Park with representatives of Puslinch township council and the Minister of the Environment of the day, John Gerretsen, that I had set up and arranged. We were very pleased to get the support of the Minister of the Environment, but

that is now five years ago, Mr. Speaker, and we're concerned that every year that goes by, this environmental assessment—someone along the line is going to say it's stale-dated, and force us all back to the drawing board. Surely the government can move more quickly than that, and it should.

In a letter to the Guelph Mercury newspaper published in April 2010, the Liberal MPP for Guelph, who is now the Minister of Education, wrote a letter to the editor. She was quoted in this letter saying, "The transportation ministry is actively working on this project, and the Morriston bypass will be built." I appreciate the support that the member for Guelph has demonstrated publicly for this project, and I would encourage her to continue to speak up for the need for it, because this issue affects Guelph and benefits Guelph, I would argue, as much as it benefits my riding.

Despite all of the past assurances from the government, the Morriston bypass unfortunately is not currently listed as a planned project in the ministry's five-year investment plan, or what we call the southern highways program. But, again, we are trying to get it on the plan.

Businesses have made significant investments in our area on the understanding that the government was moving forward, or will be moving forward, with the Morriston bypass. But with every passing year of inaction, the success of these investments and the jobs that they are have generated, quite frankly, are put in jeopardy. Opened in 2005, for example, Tim Hortons' Guelph facility has approximately 500 employees. Each year, more than 4,600 trips are made along the Highway 6 corridor to and from the facility.

Maple Leaf Foods has a new 282,000-square-foot distribution centre in Puslinch township and a 402,000-square-foot prepared meats facility currently under construction in Hamilton that will ship approximately \$200 million in goods along the Highway 6 corridor each year. It's my understanding that there have been meetings at the highest level within the government, with a Maple Leaf Foods' senior executive and with the Premier, urging—obviously, because of the significant investment, that Maple Leaf Foods has made in our area—that they need the Morriston bypass to be built. Of course, Maple Leaf Foods is part of the Morriston Bypass Coalition.

Canada Bread, in 2011, invested \$100 million to help build Canada's largest commercial bakery in Hamilton. Supporting 300 full-time jobs, the bakery ships approximately \$24 million worth of goods along the Highway 6 corridor each year. Of course, as you can imagine, the bread being shipped from the plant, stuck in that long lineup that's kilometres long through Morriston—obviously, we need to do something about it, and the solution is to build the Morriston bypass.

We have Nestlé Waters Canada located in Puslinch township. It is Canada's largest bottled water manufacturer and distributor. Its 900,000-square-foot facility in Guelph employs approximately 300 people and ships \$10 million to \$15 million worth of goods annually through Morriston. They are part of the coalition as well. They

are pushing for the Morriston bypass, and we are working together.

In terms of the Morriston residents: With their local main street serving double duty as a major transportation artery for the province of Ontario, local residents have legitimate concerns about the safety and well-being of their families. This section of Highway 6 has a much-higher-than-normal crash rate, with approximately 47% more collisions than the provincial average. Since 1994, 22 people have lost their lives on this stretch of highway, with four people killed, tragically, in head-on collisions since 2004.

I've met on numerous occasions with Bill Knetsch, who is the owner of the fine restaurant that we have in Morriston called Enver's, that many of you will have heard of. It's often written up in Toronto Life as an outstanding destination restaurant. Morriston restaurant owner Bill Knetsch said residents take their lives in their hands trying to cross the main street. Having witnessed a number of serious collisions himself, he shudders whenever he sees children riding bicycles along the roadway.

I would totally agree, having been privileged to represent Puslinch township now for a number of years, first between 1990 and 1999. After redistribution in 1999, I was no longer the MPP for Puslinch, and it was represented by other members, including the now member for Guelph. The fact is, I have again resumed responsibility for Puslinch township as a result of the redistribution in 2007 and have really tried to do everything I possibly can to advocate in this House.

We have a very good case that we've made. The Morriston Bypass Coalition actually came together as a result of a suggestion and a recommendation by the former Minister of Transportation at the time, Bob Chiarelli. We had a good meeting two or three years ago with representatives of township council. The minister said to us at that time, "Get the business community to speak up. If you want this road built, you've got to bring people together and get the business community to speak up and push for the economic arguments." Well, we've done that, Mr. Speaker. We've done it, and I think we've done it very effectively. We have this large coalition of big businesses. There are hundreds of jobs in play here. Surely to goodness the government is going to finally realize the importance of this project and get it on the five-year plan.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank you for your indulgence on this important issue of Bill 7. I appreciate it. I look forward to the continued debate on Bill 7.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I listened to the statement made by the member from Wellington—

Mr. Ted Arnott: Wellington—Halton Hills.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Wellington—Halton Hills. I'm going to learn these ridings yet. That's my thing for this particular session.

I just want to say this is quite an interesting bill. On the surface, people would argue that if you're trying to find a way to make sure that you have a strong regulatory system that protects the environment, protects health and safety but does it in a way that is able to make it a little bit easier to navigate through—I don't think anybody would be opposed to that.

The government is making a big fanfare with this particular bill and this particular initiative, but when you read the bill, it's a two-page bill. It essentially gives the government the powers it currently has, which is kind of an odd thing to do.

First of all, the government has delegated the authority of the Legislature to cabinet in most of their legislation. Whatever bill goes into cabinet, the regulations are written by cabinet, and that's something that has been delegated.

What this particular bill also does is it raises the question about how we write regulations. The problem in the way we do regulations now is, because it's done by cabinet, often those people who need to know, who want to be involved in the regulatory process, may or may not be part of that process, because it's by invitation only of the cabinet and of the minister responsible.

I think it begs the question: Should we be thinking about how we're better able to review regulations as they're written—or after they're written, at the regs and private bills committee, a committee that is specifically struck in order to look at regulations? Currently, the ability for members to review regulations is quite limited, and I think it raises an interesting point: that if the government was truly serious about being transparent, it would find some kind of way to take that whole regulatory thing out of the dark and put it under the light, where it needs to be.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to rise this morning to speak in support of Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

I heard the words from my colleague opposite from Wellington–Halton Hills and my colleague from Timmins–James Bay. I want to challenge the member from Timmins–James Bay, because he didn't mention in his remarks, in his two-minute response to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, that an important piece of Bill 7 talks about the issue of development of cluster growth, which is in schedule 2.

For those who are watching the debate this morning on this particular bill, the Toronto board of trade has put it very accurately that clusters collaborate to compete. If this bill gets passed, we will become the first jurisdiction in North America to focus on cluster development, and that is a good thing. Bill 7 will bring businesses together and keep clusters competitive and creating jobs, not just for today but for tomorrow. That is a very, very important piece of the legislation.

The minister—I know he kicked off the debate the other day on this particular bill—spoke well about the importance of the development of clusters. We know that the city of Toronto, which I am a member from, is ranked number three in North America and number 11 globally on competitiveness for a global financial centre. Ontario ranked number two in North America in terms of information, communication and technology. My colleagues from Kitchener–Waterloo, from Ottawa and here in greater Toronto know the importance of clustering and why we need to have this kind of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to speak about Bill 7.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's always a pleasure to be in the House when my colleague and friend from Wellington–Halton Hills is speaking. You wouldn't know it by looking at him, because he still looks 34, but the member from Wellington–Halton Hills is actually one of our deans here in the Legislature. He has served consistently and honourably since 1990. I think one of the reasons he does is his ability to work with all sides of the House. His advocacy on behalf of the Morriston bypass just reinforces that for me. It is an incredible amount of tenacity that, with very few exceptions, he is able to tie every legislative proposal that comes forward into the value of the Morriston bypass. The statistics and the material and the background that he includes in those debates and in his advocacy, I think, are what make him an outstanding member.

I just want to say, whatever you're doing, keep doing it, and maybe educate the rest of us, because his work on behalf of Wellington–Halton Hills really is the way we have to work as MPPs in this Legislature, regardless of whether we are in government, official opposition or the third party.

I just want to congratulate him on his work and hope that his message on the importance and the value of the Morriston bypass is getting through, because it's certainly getting through on our side.

Interjection.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is a discussion about the Morriston bypass and how it relates to Bill 7.

That's what I find is absolutely admirable, that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills continues to be able to bring forward his important policy points on why it has to happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Good morning, Speaker, and good morning to my colleagues in the House. I'm pleased to join the debate. I listened intently to—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I will speak to the Morriston bypass, because it was referenced, of course, by the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, who is quite knowledgeable on many subjects—all subjects, I would say—in the House.

The Morriston bypass: We all have important infrastructure files in our ridings. I, of course, have the Highway 3 expansion bypass that was started and worked on by my predecessor, Mr. Bruce Crozier. It is actually named after him, yet it has yet to be completed. I hope the minister is aware of that and has a plan to fulfill what I think Mr. Crozier put a lot of effort into.

Nevertheless, the bill before us, Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act, we see as a bill that really, in terms of priorities, shouldn't be before the House at this very moment. We have the ability, or the minister has the ability, to set up different protocols for cluster development. I would say that maybe a more focused approach would be something that would call on the government to develop a national manufacturing plan or a provincial manufacturing plan in conjunction with partners at the federal level, something that's being called for not only by the manufacturing industry, specifically automotive, but also by workers' groups, whether they be union or otherwise, that are telling us, as lawmakers, that we're missing the boat. We're not really doing anything when it comes to attracting investment and consolidating. Whether it be regulatory burdens or incentive programs, we're not doing enough. It's too fragmented and the province needs a strategy. That, I would see as a priority and something we should delve into, but this bill, as it is, really doesn't come even close to the edges of getting into that issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Wellington–Halton Hills. You have two minutes.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to express my appreciation to the member for Timmins–James Bay, the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, the member for Dufferin–Caledon and the member for Essex for their kind remarks. I know that this debate continues to unfold and we're looking forward to the speech that will be made by the New Democrats next—possibly the leadoff speech?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes.

Mr. Ted Arnott: So we're looking forward to that. I would hope that I'll be able to be in the House to hear the comments of the NDP.

I think there's an emerging consensus that we perhaps have unanimous consent to rename this bill the Morriston bypass support act. I'd like to seek unanimous consent—I'm just kidding, Mr. Speaker. But it would be helpful for other members to express their support, as I say. I would look for that support from others.

I especially want to express appreciation to the member for Dufferin–Caledon for her kind comments. Yes, she does an outstanding job representing the people of Dufferin–Caledon. I've been privileged to work with her going back to 2007, and before that, when she worked in the offices of John Tory, Ernie Eves and David Tilson. I've known her for a long time. She is an absolutely outstanding MPP on behalf of her constituents and in her capacity as chair of our caucus, and of course as the Attorney General critic. I certainly find her comments very encouraging, but at the same time I would extend

the very same comments to her. She is an absolutely outstanding member.

Again, I want to say, in sum, as the critic for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, that I am recommending to my caucus colleagues that our caucus support this bill at second reading, but we look forward to sending the bill to committee, hopefully, and having some hearings and hopefully not time-allocating this bill, so that there is some meaningful debate, but sending the bill to committee such that we can have meaningful hearings and hopefully hear from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and individual business people so that we can identify some of these so-called burdens, what I would call red tape, and get the government to move forward with a plan to eliminate unnecessary red tape and to do more on that respect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm happy to rise and talk on Bill 7. I got the privilege of talking for an hour on a bill that's a page and a half. I'm looking forward to doing that in the House. Bill 7 is a combination of two acts, the Burden Reduction Reporting Act and the Partnership for Jobs and Growth Act.

Ontario was once the engine for growth for the entire country of Canada and a major economic centre for the continent of North America. I remember these times well, because at that time I was working in the automotive industry in Niagara. As many of you know, Niagara was the centre of economic activity that fuelled the entire province.

During that period, we developed some of the strongest industries in the entire country and lots of clusters. A large majority of the cars this country built and exported to the world were made right in the place I call home, Niagara. We made these cars out of steel produced in Ontario, in Hamilton. We used resources drawn right here in Ontario. A few decades ago, there was massive economic development happening right across this great province, and I witnessed it first-hand.

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This bill discusses clusters, which it describes as a region of activity where related businesses work together to thrive. This was the steel manufacturing cluster in Hamilton, industrial sectors in Windsor and tourism in Niagara. These clusters developed on the backs of hard-working people of this great province.

Businesses looking to expand knew that Ontario provided the smartest, most dedicated and hard-working people you could find. They knew we had the capacity to take their businesses, to innovate, to have resources close by, to keep transportation costs low and to work with local companies to bring them to the next level. Without government interference, these businesses used their surroundings to expand.

Quite frankly, when businesses did well, people did well. When the automotive sector was booming, people in Niagara were doing well. They were employed. They

had decent, well-paying jobs. They could put in a good day of hard work and come home with a well-earned paycheck. This is the same story for the hard-working people of Ontario, from our resource industry clusters in the north to the industrial clusters in the south. As many of you know, the last decade has not been the same story unfortunately.

But these examples highlight the importance of developing our regional clusters. We do this through government support, by listening to our key stakeholders and by reducing unnecessary government regulations that stop businesses from coming to Ontario. The more businesses we can bring to Ontario, the better chance we'll have to develop these regional clusters. The stronger the development, the better it is for the taxpayers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Ontario, there is no reason why business shouldn't want to be here. We still have industrial buildings, which were so busy years ago, ready to be used again. We have an educated population, full of young workers who just want to work. I've met with these young people in my riding. It is incredible how smart they are, how dedicated they are and the hours they will put in to get the job done. When I talk to my colleagues here today, there are a lot of young people working for MPPs in this room, and I don't think anybody would ever argue how hard they work on our behalf.

We have got the resources and the infrastructure here to make our companies successful. The question becomes, how do we support these businesses? This bill proposes two ways. First is to reduce the burdens that might stop companies from coming to Ontario. The second is to encourage clusters so their development is quicker and much stronger.

So let's take a look at the first half of the bill. Reducing burdens is a good thing, so long as we know what they are. This bill defines this as "the purpose of the statutory, regulatory, procedural, administrative or other requirement that creates the cost."

If this bill is well-meaning, that is a good thing. I'll repeat that: If this bill is well-meaning, this is a good thing. If I'm reading this language right, this means that anything which cannot justify the cost paid for it should be eliminated. This is a statement that, at face value, is well-meaning. We just need to make sure we're not being unreasonable. Of course, there are a few things the current government has done which I believe can be eliminated, but I won't discuss that here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank the staff from the Ministry of Economic Development. Yesterday, they had some of their very talented and intelligent staff sit down with me and brief me on the contents of this bill. They explained that the language referred to shortening forms that may have become pointless over the years.

Obviously, we do not want businesses having to cut through tons and tons of red tape if they want to set up shop right here in Ontario. But we have to be clear: It has to be unnecessary red tape. Of course, this bill isn't

entirely clear as to what the Minister of Economic Development will consider to be unreasonable burdens.

I made this clear as well: We support removing any of the burdens that may exist because of too much paperwork or outdated policies. We just want to make sure the bill says that. If not, Mr. Speaker, there could be issues around regulations and rules that exist to protect workers. Workplace safety regulations come to mind first. I know my colleagues that are here today, and probably all those glued to their televisions back in their offices, are worried about that too. They want safe workplaces across the province of Ontario.

But I'm worried that instead of helping businesses grow safely, this act is a smokescreen that will scale back safety laws that protect our workers. According to this bill, the minister could say we're paying too much to keep our workers safe in their work environments. Maybe the minister feels that instead of investing in our businesses here in Ontario, he can cut costs by cutting out regulations that companies are forced to have to keep our workers safe—the same safety regulations, Mr. Speaker, that workers have fought for decades to have. They're not in place to be inconvenient. They are in place to make sure that no man and no woman—and, in some cases, some of our young children that go and work part-time as they're going to school—ever has to worry about maybe not coming home, as we've seen in this province before.

There are examples of this all across the province of Ontario. As the member from Nickel Belt has mentioned before, there are serious concerns with the Liberal government and their love affair with private clinics that outsource medical care to private buyers. They're setting up shop faster than we can keep track of them, yet they are running around proper health and safety standards.

I had the privilege just the other day to go and talk to our brothers and sisters at ONA, right down here at the Westin. They had a thousand nurses and workers. I had a chance to talk to them. You know what they told us and what they informed us of, what their convention was about and what they said to our labour minister from the Liberal Party? They told him the number one issue in their workplace is safety and how they were being hurt on the job. When you look at sectors—you look at the steel sector, at the auto sector—you would think that's where all the injuries are happening. The number one workplace is with nurses, getting hurt on the job.

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So yes, reducing red tape has allowed private health clinics to open up quickly and allowed them to take Ontarians' hard-earned money, and put their health at risk. You only have to talk to ONA on that issue, and the nurses who do an incredible, incredible job for all of us every day.

Instead of people going to clinics to get healthy, they're actually getting sicker. Think about it: health clinics not following health regulations. Let me say this again: I'm all for reducing unneeded burdens that allow businesses to open right here in Ontario. But we can't

support it if the minister is going to use this clause to slash and burn regulations that keep our people safe and healthy in our workplaces across the province of Ontario.

On paper, it looks great. And quite frankly, it's a page and a half, this bill. Like I said, I was thrilled to get the opportunity to talk for an hour on a page and a half. But it wasn't the page and a half that concerned me; it was what was trying to be said in that page and a half. So on paper it looks great. The government lets a private clinic set up shop. They open quickly; the government overpays the developers; and in the end we pick up the costs when things go wrong.

Regulations need to be closely examined before they are slashed. This bill provides nothing up front to address that issue. It gives the minister the authority to slash regulations and report on them after the fact. We need provisions that protect citizens and employees.

Let's take a look at another issue, one raised by the MPP from Kitchener–Waterloo. We have a serious issue in this province where our young workers are being put in dangerous situations involving heights. There's no legislation that demands that employers do their part and properly give their workers height training. We see young workers, our sons and our daughters, our grandkids, workers who are out there striving to get a job, who are afraid—and my daughters have told me this—to refuse unsafe work, getting injured and killed in the workplace. We can't be cutting burdens like that when it comes to training and regulations. Certainly, we need to implement regulations to save workers' lives. When it comes to getting business here in Ontario, let's support them. Let's make sure there are no unnecessary burdens to overcome, but let's make sure this bill isn't used as a wholesale deregulation of very important standards.

It could be the case that some health and safety training that is regulated costs money. But companies that say that need to ask themselves a more important question. This is important. If you ask the businesses across the province in Ontario, they'll tell you the same thing: What is the cost of paying an injured worker or going to court? On the face of it, it may look like removing certain burdens would save money, but realistically, having some regulations and restrictions helps to make sure some companies aren't paying much higher fees later on.

That's what I'd say when it comes to the definition of a burden. If you're discussing removing procedures that are costly and unnecessary, let's get it done. Let's do it. Let's make sure it's easy for business to open up shop in my riding in Niagara, in Sudbury and in Toronto. But let's make sure we're not opening the doors for companies to skip over regulations and put the people of Ontario at risk. Let's make sure we legislate where we must to protect people and remove burdens where we can to foster better businesses and business growth here in Ontario.

We never want to see a person get injured or even killed because there was not enough analysis done when it comes to removing a regulation. If we do this right, we can create an Ontario where businesses have no fear of unnecessary regulations, but also where workers and

everyday citizens can sleep at night knowing that proper safety regulations are being followed. I believe, at the end of the day, that becomes a win-win for everybody. That's where we should go.

The first part of the bill is interesting. It requires that the minister submit a report to this Legislature every year on the work they've been doing to reduce unnecessary burdens. Like I said before, this bill is pretty vague in its language. The definition it offers of burdens can be looked at in a number of ways. If the minister were to clarify in the act how this government is going to distinguish between what a regulation is, a burden necessary to protect the public interest, and what burdens are unnecessary costs to businesses—that's what this act should be looking at. Then I would feel a whole lot better.

Clarifying this act is the best way to make sure we're eliminating what isn't necessary and keeping what is vitally important. I fear that one report always made after the fact will be quite lengthy and oftentimes far too late. In the case of our clinics or our workers, a report after the fact would reverse the side effects of mass deregulation.

When you take a look at the bill, it says that the report will be done sometime before June 30, but when you follow closer into the language, the language says, "but it may be extended." The word "may," in the world I come from, is a very soft word when it comes to language. You always like to say "shall"; you like to see something like that. What could happen in the report: The report could be done on June 30 one year and the next year you're expecting another report on June 30, but they could extend it to December 31 because that constitutes a year. You have to have some concerns around that.

The other concern I have around the reporting: Wouldn't it make a lot more sense that, before you do anything and eliminate any regulations or put any hardships onto the business—why wouldn't we do the report before, and have that discussion and make sure what they're doing is something that makes sense to all of us?

The example I got yesterday from my colleagues was WSIB. You can talk about WSIB in this room for probably hours, on the problems that we have there. But on the forms what they're saying is, "One of the things that's really giving us a hiccup is that somebody may get injured on the job, but there's no lost time involved." They didn't get off the job. They didn't lose, really, any time on the job, yet they have to fill out this long, long form on exactly what happened. They said that they would like to see that form shortened. Well, that would make a little bit of sense. I could understand that.

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Those types of things we could have, but it would be nice, before we see the report, if we actually had that dialogue. I think for everybody in this House—if they could make it a shorter form from a long form, I don't think that's an issue. That's my concern with the reporting, we're going to get it all after the fact, so clarifying this in the act is the best way to make sure we're eliminating what isn't necessary and keeping what is vitally important. I fear one report—always made after the fact—will be quite lengthy, so I'm concerned about that.

Let's make sure we make Ontario the best place in North America to invest. We all know our problems with people finding jobs. We've got everything an investor could want. I want to repeat that for my colleagues across so they hear it quite well: We've got everything an investor could want right here in Ontario. We have manufacturing, we have natural resources, and most importantly—and I've heard this coming from folks from all around the world—we have the smartest, most dedicated and the hardest-working workers in the world. There is no reason Ontario cannot be the economic powerhouse it has historically been. We need to work with businesses and workers alike to make that a reality.

If we have smart and dedicated economic development, we can finally lift Ontario out of the slump that has existed since the financial downturn and give people the work they deserve. That's in the first part of the bill, which is removing government from the process, where it makes sense, and allowing businesses the opportunity to set up and grow here in Ontario—that used to be a commercial. Do you remember that? “Set up and grow in Ontario.” Maybe I'm the only one who remembers that. Maybe I'm showing my age here; I'm not sure. I didn't get any feedback over there; they didn't even pay attention to that one. I thought that was a good line: Set up and grow here in Ontario. That's what we need.

The second part of the bill actually puts the government back into the process. The second part of this bill deals with clusters. For those of you who are unaware, according to this legislation, clusters tend to be considered geographic groupings of similar businesses. We all understand that. At first glance, it may just look like a few groups decide to set up shop in the same area, but identifying and nurturing these clusters is far more important than that. When a group of businesses cluster together we see some great things when it comes to economic growth. By being situated close together, there is an increase in competition, but not always just competition, oftentimes collaboration as well, which is equally important. By being so close to one another, these businesses tend to be innovative and grow off of one another.

So when these clusters start to form, the best and the brightest who work in these industries that are being developed move in to the region. When they move to the area, more businesses are attracted to come to these centres of innovation and take advantage of these employees or, just as important, the resource base. A pool of working, wherever it is made, makes a certain geographic area attractive, whether that be up north, whether it be in Kitchener–Waterloo or whether it be in Niagara. The more businesses that come, the more jobs they make. I think we all understand that. That's what the idea of the cluster is. The larger the businesses, the more competition, the more innovation and so on, as it goes. So you can see why developing these clusters is a good thing. Probably one of the most famous examples is Silicon Valley in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, right here in Ontario—right here in Ontario—we have a number of clusters that provide

some of Ontario's best jobs, well-paying—things that we need right here. Two great examples are the IT cluster in the Waterloo area and the automotive cluster in Windsor, and in Niagara, my area of the province of Ontario.

In St. Catharines, we have a General Motors plant that employs 2,000 people, both union and non-union. The plant builds a V6 engine. It has engine lines and assembly lines. But what happens when an automotive plant is in your area? The plant employs people who live in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Port Colborne—the entire area. Basically every city in the region would have employees there. But there's support there it builds off of.

There's a CAMI plant, which turns out the Equinox and the Terrain. So you can see, that's a bit of a cluster. If you talk to the workers down there, they have a lot of parts suppliers that are supplying to that plant. Well, CAMI has about 3,000 employees, and they say that every automotive industry job creates another six to seven spinoff jobs, direct and indirect jobs—very important clusters.

I'm going to tell you a quick story about a plant. It's called SpencerARL. It does logistics for the transmission plant in Niagara. Now this was a plant that came into Niagara Falls, and they were awarded the job of supplying to General Motors, doing some inspection, doing some of that stuff for them. They started with 11 employees—11. As we showed the highly skilled workforce that we had here—people in the manufacturing sector who unfortunately had lost their jobs in places like Hayes-Dana or Edscha—they saw that they had workers right in Niagara who had the experience to work in the automotive sector who understood what it's like to work in a plant, who understood what it was like to work shift work.

I don't know how many in this room have worked shift work. Shift work is not always easy. It's not easy on the family. Trying to get your kids to hockey when you're working shift work—a lot of that responsibility would fall on one of the parents, one of the partners of the relationship, male or female. Because in a lot of cases in these workplaces today, there are women working there. There are men working there. Some are working in the same plant, and they're all taking their kids to different stuff. But SpencerARL is a good example of what a cluster can do.

So General Motors awarded a new transmission line to the St. Catharines plant, and I believe it was close to a \$600-million investment in St. Catharines—all good news. General Motors made that decision. I believe—like I think everybody in the room does, all my colleagues here—that we have some of the most talented workers in the world right here. We know how to build cars in this country. We're the best.

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But SpencerARL started at 11. Today, Mr. Speaker, do you know how many employees they have there? I know you're dying for me to tell you, because you're

looking right at me. Three hundred—300 employees. They've grown from 11—by the way, all unionized; that was never an issue at this company, which I think I like to say. They came in and they sat down with the union when they had 11. We hammered out a collective agreement, and I can say a very good collective agreement, because I bargained it with the company across the table. They were excited to come to Ontario. They were excited to open up in Niagara Falls. It was the first manufacturing—I was on city council as well in Niagara Falls—to come to Niagara Falls in close to 20 years, and they grew from 11 to 300. That's what the cluster is about, quite frankly.

They're 12 minutes away from the plant, so just-in-time is nice and easy. We can talk about the infrastructure that we need to fix to help businesses as well; we can't be stuck on the highway, on the 401, all the time. But this is a plant that's 11 or 12 minutes away. Just on time, they get the parts there. It's absolutely incredible what's happened. But they grew from 11 to 30 because of a cluster, because General Motors made a business decision to come to St. Catharines and the surrounding area—SpencerARL being the case here—and grew from 11 to 30. I think that's what we're talking about when we talk about clusters.

The offshoot to that was that there's another company that, because the basement in General Motors was empty and because of, again—I didn't participate in this—the bargaining of the union, they agreed to utilize the open space in the basement to have another company come there. They're called Offsite. What happened is that they came into the basement and the same thing happened: They started with 12, maybe 14, employees. They're now up to 80.

As a cluster grows, what happens? It's a highly skilled workforce, so they're excited to come to Ontario. Why wouldn't you be? It's a great province. So the clusters can certainly work, and I think I've given you two pretty good examples.

Now, I don't know the names of the companies, but there are tool and die shops that have now come in and that are now doing work within the area. As you see the automotive cluster, you see how it grew. We went from, say, 11 employees at SpencerARL, 11 employees in the basement, to where now we're talking 400 employees making what I would consider a fair wage with fair benefits, working in the province of Ontario and taking home a paycheque to their families. I think that's all good news for us. I certainly believe, on our side of the House, that we can support that. Why wouldn't we support it? It's putting our kids and our grandkids to work.

The big thing in Niagara is that some of the other plants closed, like Dana, like Edscha, where they lost jobs, they've now been put back to work doing the same thing they've done their entire life because of the cluster and because of a decision, and, quite frankly, through the support of the Ontario government, that we were able to negotiate a brand new transmission line in the St. Cather-

ines plant, and now the cluster is growing. Tool and die, inspection, machine shops: It's absolutely great.

I wanted to tell that story because I think it talks to the bill on how clusters can work. They certainly can work in Niagara around automotive.

I can talk about tourism because I have a few minutes left. It looks like I have lots of minutes left, so I've got lots of time to talk. It's one of the things I enjoy doing. We can talk about tourism, and I'll do that for a minute.

The reason why I'm going to do that is because I think it's important. We're going back a few years to 1995, in that area; it might be 1994, but it's back a bit. As you get older, your memory isn't quite as good, but it's in that area. There was a decision made to build a casino in Niagara Falls. It's going to create 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 jobs when it's up and running. It's a good-news story, right? It's tourism. I'd ask my colleagues, how many have been to Niagara Falls here? I think everybody has been to Niagara Falls. Right?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Exactly.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I lived there for a couple of years.

Mr. Wayne Gates: There you go: Some of my colleagues have been to Niagara Falls.

You can see what happened in Niagara Falls when the casino came. First of all, what happened is they hired 3,000 or 4,000 people—good-paying jobs, around the clock. Casinos are open 365 days a year, I believe, seven days a week. What it did is it created a cluster of other businesses, direct and indirect. You know what I said about the automotive sector? That's exactly what happened in tourism. Now you need somebody to supply the food, so now you have a group that is doing that.

What happened in Niagara Falls and, I believe, put it on the map just outside of the falls, was that billions and billions of dollars were invested in new hotels in Niagara Falls, creating thousands and thousands of jobs—again, a tourism cluster, something that we needed.

Quite frankly, I'm going to make a pitch. The city of Niagara Falls, while I was sitting on city council—we're happy with the two that we have. We believe there should be more investment in upgrading one of our casinos, but we believe there is room for another casino in Niagara Falls. That's one thing we think we should work at. The other thing is that we had a cluster in Fort Erie, the same type of thing around tourism.

Now, think about what we're saying here, because the bill is talking about clusters. We have an automotive cluster, we have an IT cluster, we have a tourism cluster. In Fort Erie, we had a cluster. They had the slots in Fort Erie, and the slots, through their revenue, were providing some revenue for the racetrack. You know how that all worked. It created 300 jobs, and then it created jobs in the hotel sector, the restaurants and all the local businesses. So now you're creating four and five more jobs.

The problem that we had with that particular cluster is—and a decision that I'm hoping, at some point in time, we can sit down with the government and get changed—

let's reopen that casino and continue to have that cluster and those jobs.

At the racetrack, there were 1,000 jobs: 700 direct, 300 indirect. The casino, the slots part of it, had almost 300 jobs. Revenue was going to the council. Some of the revenue was going to help with the purses at the track.

What happens with that cluster? Who wins? The government of Ontario wins, because they're getting tax dollars, which we know we need from looking at where we're at. We create jobs at the slots. We create jobs at the racetrack. We create jobs at the local businesses, the local restaurants and the local malls. That's how the cluster should work.

Tourism can be an extremely important cluster right across the province of Ontario. We know what it does for Toronto, with the tourists who are here—it's incredible every day—from all over the world. So the clusters can work. I know I got a little bit off topic there, but I think it's important to talk about how clusters can work and put people back to work.

I didn't talk—and I should, I guess, for the people who are from Toronto. I don't know how many are in the room today who are from Toronto. There's an auto plant right here on the highway in Oakville. It's a very good plant, Local 707, producing great products. They just had a big announcement of more jobs down there. They're running full out. It's a really good local, a really good plant: high quality, highly skilled.

What happens in Oakville—I saw you put your hand up. What happens in Oakville? It's the same thing. Right? In the plants there, the workers are going to work six, seven days a week. The skilled trades are in there working. What happens outside? You have all the other businesses outside that are feeding off that plant—a great cluster for Oakville, right here in Toronto.

These are just a few of the industries that form the automotive and industrial cluster from southern Ontario.

I would like to mention—because it has helped with the tourism cluster in Niagara Falls, with the plant operating at Spencer ARL, with the GM plant getting the investment with the new V6—sorry, the new transmission line. A new engine line, by the way, also came to St. Catharines.

Why is that? Why are people choosing Ontario to do business?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a good place to invest.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's the best. It's the best place to invest.

There's no doubt that the cluster will work. It's because of the workers. It's because they're highly skilled. It's because of how well they do their jobs. We produce.

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I want to be clear on this for all my colleagues here: We have nothing to be ashamed of in the province of Ontario when it comes to producing automobiles in this country. We produce the best automobiles because we have the best workers, we have the highest productivity and quality by far, and that's the reason they come to Ontario. I just wanted to throw that out.

Mr. Steve Clark: You should put some music behind that. That was a good commercial.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I can't sing; I'm sorry. I would if I could. I can't sing at all.

I can tell you, I am so proud of the workers of Ontario in the automotive sector and a lot of other sectors right across the province, because we are the best. We've got to get them to work. We've got to get everybody back to work. We still have too much unemployment.

There are a few of the industries that form the automotive and industrial clusters found in southern Ontario.

I find it interesting that this Liberal government has language like this in the bill—or maybe it isn't so confusing. The bill is particularly vague—and that's my concern with the bill—when it comes to the language around it and the support of the clusters. Remember, I used that example: “may” and “shall.” That's why it's important to have strong language when you put a bill together: “We shall do this.” “We shall do that.” “We may do a report once a year” or “We can extend that report”—those types of things are not, and why I say it's vague.

This bill says, “Ontario can act as a catalyst to spur the development of clusters. By working with businesses and other entities to develop plans with respect to the development of clusters, Ontario can promote the growth of jobs and the economy.” It sounds great, doesn't it? I can say I support that 100%. I support this province acting as a prime supporter of our businesses' clusters and working with key players in those sectors to create a strong development of our economy. I'm sure my colleagues heard that.

Mr. Speaker, maybe this bill means a big shift in policy from the Liberal government of two weeks ago.

Some time ago, Ford approached the province of Ontario with a plan. It was going to develop a small fuel-efficient engine right here in Ontario. It was going to tap into the manufacturing cluster that exists in Windsor—I never talked about that cluster, but there is a really good cluster in Windsor—use our hard workers, use our access to resources, our industrial strength. They were going to expand their operations to produce that engine right here in Ontario. By tapping into the manufacturing sector in Windsor, they were going to create 1,000 jobs.

We've got economists who say that for every one job created directly in the automotive plant, there are six spinoff jobs—some say it's as high as eight—created for the economy. So for 1,000 jobs, that's an extra 6,000 people, roughly, who would go back to work, and in this case, including the 460 people who are on layoff currently in that plant. I talked to their chairperson yesterday about this, and he agrees: We have to be more proactive; we have to sit down and make sure, with all the stakeholders, so that we're getting in the front door of these investments and finding out how we can make sure that when companies are going to invest, they're going to invest right here in Ontario. I think it's important that all the stakeholders do that and find the best way to be more proactive than reactive to these types of investments. I

think, collectively, we can do that, and I believe that everybody agrees with that as well.

These are not poor minimum wage jobs without benefits, but safe, secure jobs—oh, I'm sorry. You stand, I sit.
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased this morning to introduce Anne and Chris French from my riding, the parents of Elijah French, who I'd like to congratulate on being page captain for today. Please join me in welcoming them.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very pleased to welcome three guests who are here today: Paul Smith from the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers; and Lisa Whalen and Kirk Patterson, who are from Education at Work Ontario. Welcome.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm pleased to welcome here to Queen's Park the World Lebanese Cultural Union, who will be raising their flag at 12 noon here today in front of Queen's Park, and everybody is welcome.

With us today we have Judge George E. Khouri, the world chairman of the Commission of International Relations, World Lebanese Cultural Union; Rita Houkayem, youth chair of the World Lebanese Cultural Union, Toronto, and former Miss Lebanon Emigrant 2013; and John Gideon, treasurer, World Lebanese Cultural Union, Toronto. Welcome to the provincial Legislature.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Scarborough Southwest, I'd like to recognize not merely page captain Kate Beverly, but she's joined here by her mom, Karen Beverly; her dad, Rob Beverly; and her brother, Jack Beverly. They will also be in the members' gallery this morning and I hope members welcome her family.

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce two young community activists from Willowdale who do lots of stuff in Willowdale and worked very hard on my campaign: Frank Hong, who also is a former page, and Theo Poenaru. They're in the east gallery. Stand up.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of, I hope, all members, to say a happy birthday to one of our colleagues who is celebrating her birthday on November 22. Donc, j'aimerais souhaiter une joyeuse fête, une bonne fête, à notre collègue Madeleine Meilleur, qui célèbre son anniversaire samedi.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thirty-nine?

Further introductions.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is a very special day for me because I have several members of my family joining us. I'm going to ask the opposition: If you're going to demand my resignation, wait until Monday, okay? Don't embarrass me in front of my family.

I'm delighted that my sisters Dona Matthews and Virginia Lato are here. Others are coming: my sister Shelley Peterson; my sister Carole Matthews; my father, Don Matthews; his sisters, Shirley Pettigrew and Barb Rutherford; Anne Pettigrew, my cousin; Nancy Rutherford; and Thelma Abriam. We're all delighted to be here today celebrating democracy in action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, by 2017-18 the government expects to squander over 10 cents of every revenue dollar collected by Queen's Park towards servicing your Liberal government's reckless and unaffordable debt. That's taxpayers' money that should be reinvested in front-line health care, first-rate education, reliable roads and transit.

Instead of showing leadership and taking decisive action, you're going to force hard-working Ontarians to pay more for a decade of Liberal mismanagement.

Premier, what taxes will you raise on Ontario's families in order to service that debt and balance the books?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just say that we've been very clear about the path to balance that we have laid out. We understand that it's extremely important that we continue to constrain increases on wages. We laid out clearly that we were going to be looking at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and making sure that they are working to the best advantage of the people of Ontario, and that's the work that Ed Clark and his commission are doing.

We also recognize that as the economic recovery takes hold, it's extremely important that we make the investments that are necessary so that we can continue to create jobs and work with municipalities to make sure that communities grow, because the economic well-being of communities across this province is part of the economic well-being of the province.

We have laid that all out in our budget, then in our platform and then in our budget again, and that's the plan we're implementing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: Premier, because of your inability to stop spending and reverse course, Ontario has a half-a-billion-dollar shortfall this year alone.

Ontarians cannot afford any more money taken out of their pockets. They cannot afford new and higher taxes.

On the issue of a carbon tax, your environment minister has said, "It is time for all of us to start to get Comfortable with two words: carbon tax. Without it, all these dreams of a green tomorrow are hallucinations."

So, Premier, a straightforward question: Will you be introducing a carbon tax on hard-working Ontario families before 2018? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, what we are focused on is making sure that we do everything in our power to grow the economy. We understand that balancing the books and making sure that the deficit is reduced by 2017-18 is very much a part of the task in front of us, but we also know that building on the success of creating over 500,000 net new jobs since the recession, the lowest unemployment rate since the recession, at 6.5%—we recognize that building on those successes is what we have to do if we are going to be successful over the next decade.

The investments that we're talking about that will ease people's commutes, that will make sure that communities have the roads and bridges that they need, the hospitals and the schools—those contribute to a quality of life that is critical to the economic and the social well-being of the people in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like a yes to me.

Premier, Laurel Broten, a former Ontario Liberal environment minister and cabinet colleague of yours, is calling on the Nova Scotia government to introduce a carbon tax.

Quebec implemented a carbon tax in 2007 and then became part of the Western Climate Initiative. In August 2014, you announced a strengthened relationship with Quebec on the issue of climate change. Your news release even quoted Premier Couillard as saying, "We are looking forward to recruiting new partners among our neighbours."

Well, to be a partner, you have to have a carbon tax. So, Premier, do you plan on joining Quebec and imposing a carbon tax on Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, here's what we're joining with Quebec on: an acknowledgment that reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dealing with the effects of climate change is a challenge for every single one of us. The member opposite is the first to jump up if there is a tornado or if there is a flood or if there is an indication of the impact of climate change.

On this side of the House, we believe that climate change is a reality that we have to deal with—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will come to order.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The single most important thing that has been done in this country in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the shutdown of coal-fired plants in Ontario.

Are we going to continue to fight climate change? Are we going to continue to do everything in our power to guarantee that there is a world for our children in the future? Absolutely.

1040

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, we can play the shell game all we want. A tax is a tax is a tax, whether you call it a carbon tax or not, Premier.

Back to the Premier: During the last election you called cuts to education "dangerous for children." In fact, you said cuts to education funding were "detrimental and have such a negative impact on so many people's lives in this province" that you would never support them. Yet you're now planning to cut \$500 million from the education budget because of your fiscal mismanagement. You claimed that these cuts were dangerous during the election, yet now your government is taking millions of dollars out of the classroom. Premier, is this just another case of you saying one thing and then doing another?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that our government has increased funding to the education system every single year we've been in office, and we're continuing to do that. We've increased education funding to \$22 billion this year. That's an increase of 56.5% since 2003, an increase of more than \$4,000 per student.

The fact is that we have made sure that the resources that go into education go into advanced student achievement. We came into office and 68% of kids were graduating from high school in this province; 83% of kids are graduating from high school in Ontario now. The reality is that, at a time of declining enrolment, we have continued to increase funding to the education system because we know that's how the talents and skills of our kids can thrive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Your former Liberal colleague and successor as education minister, Leona Dombrowsky said, "The government believes locally elected school boards have sound processes in place to make decisions about school closures in consultation with their communities." You've said similar things many times. Yet yesterday, your current education minister made it pretty clear in this House that you will not fund under-capacity schools, leaving the impression that the minister will make the decision on what schools will close.

Premier, which is it? Will individual school boards decide which schools will close, if any? Or will you order the school closings yourself?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, what I heard the Minister of Education say was that we have to make sure that we fund the students and the places in the schools—the students that exist—that we will make sure that we work with school boards to maximize the investments in their school boards, to make sure that the programs that are available to kids are the ones that they absolutely need.

I've been a school trustee. I fully support the authority of school boards to make decisions about program delivery to students. But it is only responsible that we

work as a provincial government with school boards—something, I might say, the member opposite doesn't know a lot about, given their track record in government—to make sure that the distribution of kids is in schools in the best way possible and that we're not funding empty or half-empty schools.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I don't need any lectures, after 24 and a half years in this House, serving school boards, preaching for good education and supporting good education.

Premier, as education minister you said, "It would in fact be irresponsible—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Order.

Please finish.

Mr. Jim Wilson: As education minister you said, "It would in fact be irresponsible for any government to tie the hands of local school boards to make decisions about their communities." However, by slashing half a billion dollars from the education budget, you're doing exactly that. You're making school closures, particularly in rural and small-town Ontario, a done deal.

Premier, very simply, when will you release the list of the schools you're planning to close?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me repeat: We are increasing funding to the education system. In the face of declining enrolment, we are increasing the funding to school boards. That's a fact. That is the reality. That is the reality that school boards are dealing with.

Will we continue to work with school boards to make sure that kids are getting the programs that they need, that there are enough kids in schools to make them viable? Absolutely, we will continue to work with school boards.

Will we work with school boards to help them to consolidate where there's an opportunity for school boards to work together? Absolutely, we will do that. I think that is responsible management of the public dollars in this province.

Will we continue to work with school boards to improve student achievement as we have done—and we have seen student achievement increase? Absolutely, we will do that.

Will we fund empty spaces and will we step back from the process? No, we will continue to work with school boards.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Premier said, "The reality is that we continue to put more money into education." But an internal document says that under the Liberal austerity plan, "The recent pattern of annual increases in education funding is no longer sustainable." Internally, the Liberals say that half a billion dollars is going to be slashed from

schools. In public, the Premier is playing good cop, telling Ontarians that they are going to be putting more into education, and in private she's being bad cop and saying that the well is dry, Speaker. Why is the Premier telling one story in public and another story behind closed doors?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Education is going to want to weigh in on this, but let me repeat what I have said: We continue to put more money into education. Even in the face of declining enrolment, that is what we have been doing.

The reality is that there are ways of school boards working together—and I'll use transportation as the example that is the farthest along. The reality is that we have worked over a number of years, in fact since I was Minister of Transportation, to make sure that school boards have the capacity to work together and that they have the ability to have kids from different boards and different schools on the same school bus, so that school buses driving down a particular road pick up kids and take them to a number of schools. That kind of co-operation, whether it's transportation or whether it's back office or whether it's sharing buildings—yes, we're going to continue to try to work to find those efficiencies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Despite the Premier's denials, internal documents say clearly that she's slashing \$500 million from schools. As a former Minister of Education and school board trustee, the Premier knows that it's always the most vulnerable students who suffer the most from this. Whether it's school closures or cuts to special needs, ESL, school breakfast programs, libraries, literacy and numeracy supports or counselling services, the bottom line is that it's going to hurt students.

Will the Premier commit to putting that half a billion dollars back into our schools, where it belongs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On so many issues it is so dangerous to oversimplify and to take a particular notion and extrapolate that across a whole issue. The fact is that there are many, many instances across the province where school boards have made decisions about consolidating schools, and the programs have improved. Those very students that the leader of the third party is talking about get better service, Mr. Speaker, they get better opportunities, they have more opportunities because of the consolidation of a school board or because of the building of a new building. More times than not, when there's a consolidation of schools, there is a renovation or a new school built. So I think to oversimplify this issue and to somehow suggest that the fact that we're putting more money in education is a problem is irresponsible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, there's nothing simple about it. Slashing half a billion dollars from education is going to mean ripping schools out of some communities and overcrowding others. It's going to mean program cuts. It's going to hurt the most vulnerable students in our schools, and this Premier knows that's true. The Premier

created chaos in our school system with Bill 115, and she's creating chaos again with a half-a-billion-dollar cut to schools.

If she's not prepared to put the money back into our schools, will she stand up and tell parents and educators exactly what it is that she's going to be cutting from them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think I'd like to start by talking a little bit about the funding model, because classrooms are funded, as you well know, Speaker, based on the number of students. Looking at boards and working with boards on whether they can operate the space more efficiently has nothing to do with the number of teachers or the amount of special ed money. That's all based on the number of students, and it has absolutely nothing to do with this issue.

What we do believe is that it's perfectly reasonable to work with trustees and say to them, "In terms of your operations," which is heating, lighting, space, "we can work together to make it more efficient."

All we're saying is good management, no matter who you are, involves good management of space.

1050

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. In health care, just as in education, before the election we were promised that things would get better. After the election, we see that things are getting much worse. Today, Health Quality Ontario released its annual report, and they say, "Access to care continues to be a problem in many areas of our health system."

When Ontario is compared to 10 countries, including Great Britain and the United States, we come dead last—dead last—when it comes to getting people in to see a doctor when they are sick. Yes, we even do worse than the US, Speaker.

Does the Premier think it's okay that Ontarians wait longer to see a doctor than patients in 10 other countries?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is, we know that there is more that we can do. We have been working to transform the health care system. There are a number of areas where wait times have been reduced, and we have made a lot of progress.

But we also know that we're dealing with an aging population that needs a different kind of service, that needs more service at home, and that's the transformation that we are in the midst of. We're not proposing that we are finished with the transformation of the health care system. We know that there's more that has to be done, and part of that is getting the right services to people where they need them, whether that is in a hospital or whether that is at home or whether that is in some other kind of supportive housing.

This is an issue that is ongoing. We know that there's more to be done, and we are investing in those changes in order to get to those successes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: During the election, the Premier said, "Ontario will be the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old." But now that the election is over, the Health Quality Ontario report says that long-term-care wait times for residents in hospitals have never been higher. They're higher today than at any other point since the Liberals came to office, tripling from just 18 days in 2004 to a staggering 65 days. Under this Liberal government, seniors are waiting longer than ever in hospital for the long-term care that they need.

How healthy does the Premier think it is to have seniors waiting over two months for long-term care that they need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We welcome the release of Health Quality Ontario's report. It's called Measuring Up. We're committed to providing the best patient care possible.

We have adopted a process of transformation that has provided different kinds of service and has allowed people to get service at home, in the community, where they haven't been able to get it before. Are we finished? Absolutely not. But there are many areas in the report that show the successes that we have achieved. Measuring Up talks about the fact that Ontarians are healthier than they have ever been.

The fact is that the work we are doing is actually providing services that people need, providing them with the services that they've been looking for, and providing them in their homes and in the community, where they weren't able to get them before.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: During the campaign, the Premier promised she would hire nurses, not fire them. In fact, she said, "I'm not going to apologize for hiring nurses." But after the campaign, the truth comes out. Every year for the last five years, we've had fewer registered nurses looking after our kids, our parents and our loved ones.

Ontario Nurses' Association president Linda Haslam-Stroud uses words like "appalled"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Order, please. That's better. Thank you.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: ONA president Linda Haslam-Stroud uses words like "appalled," "disgusted" and "horrified" to describe what's going on in parts of this province under this Liberal government. Registered nurse positions are being eliminated all over Ontario, creating an appalling situation in this province.

So I ask this Premier, will she apologize for that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's talk about the facts. The fact is that we have hired over 20,000 nurses, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about the fact that we've established 26 nurse-practitioner-led clinics. Let's talk about the fact that we have now got 10 aboriginal community health

centres, 76 community health centres and 200 family health teams.

We have diversified the ways in which people can access primary health care. We have hired more professionals, and we have put them into interdisciplinary teams that are delivering health care in a way that makes sense to people in communities across the province. That's why the Health Quality Ontario report is able to say that Ontarians are healthier than ever.

We will continue to make investments and continue to transform the health care system so that it meets the needs of the people of this province.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Repeated warnings about the structural problems at the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake were ignored by your government. On January 11, 2012, an inspector from the Ministry of Labour performed an inspection of the mall that, to quote Justice Bélanger, "was perfunctory, in-curious and inadequate."

You have not apologized on behalf of your government for playing a part in the mall's collapse. An apology can go a long way. It can help speed up the healing process after a tragedy. Premier, will you apologize for your government's lack of oversight, which contributed to this tragedy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Labour is going to want to speak to the specifics. I just want to say that we have said all along, and I have said all along, that our hearts go out to the community members, particularly to the family of the woman who died in the collapse of the mall. I'm very—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Sorry, the two people who perished.

I am very pleased that the report has exposed the issues that needed to have been dealt with, and I will let the Minister of Labour speak to the specifics.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I think it would mean a great deal more if you actually went to Elliot Lake and did that formal apology, as you did with the other examples that we have.

In 2009, your government passed the Apology Act, which allows a person to apologize on a specific issue. The Attorney General at the time said this bill "gives people the opportunity to have closure, to speak frankly in relation to an issue, whether it's a health care issue or a legal issue or some other matter, without having those comments that they're making used against them in a court of law."

You have an opportunity to show real leadership and apologize to the people of Elliot Lake for your lack of oversight. Premier, when will you apologize to the people of Elliot Lake?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I think I can speak for all members of the House that we were all saddened when we heard the news of this mall collapse. Our thoughts and our prayers have been with the families ever since then.

We would also, I think, all in this House, like to thank the Honourable Paul Bélanger for his work on this matter, for the report on this matter, for the recommendations he has made. All the ministries involved are reviewing the report. We're working together. We're looking at the recommendations that are contained within it. Some of the recommendations that have come forward, we've already acted upon.

I know one engineer has been charged under the Occupational Health and Safety Act in relation to the mall collapse. The individual was charged as a professional engineer for endangering a worker as a result of providing negligent advice, and as a worker for working in a manner that may endanger a worker.

Speaker, we were all saddened at the news. I think it's the intent of this House that this type of tragedy never happen again in the province of Ontario.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Speaker, the Liberals keep saying they're being transparent. They say they are telling the whole story on MaRS. Yet on page 1 of the agreement that the Liberals signed with MaRS, it says, "OILC has advised the borrower that its loan application number 11039, dated August 2, 2011, has been approved." But, Speaker, the actual application paperwork for the loan is nowhere to be found.

Premier, where is the application?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have instructed my deputy minister to release all documents that were requested, both during the time at estimates that I spent with the member and from the media. All requests for information have been released.

1100

For these loan programs, the application process is online. If a request is made to release that application, we're happy to do it. I've actually seen the application. There's nothing in it you don't already have, but it's something I'm happy to ask my deputy minister to have a look at, just to make sure it's something that's suitable for release. If it's his determination that it is, I'll be happy to release it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, let's cut to the chase. The Liberals have not released the business case for the loan that they made to MaRS—you haven't done it—a loan, Speaker, by the way, they had to bail out in secret during the election. They're not even releasing the loan application yet.

This government still hasn't explained why this multi-million dollar project, contingent on an 80% occupancy in order to be worth the investment, was allowed to go forward. What is the Premier so desperate to keep away from the public?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm glad the member modified his supplementary question to put the word "yet" in, because I just said yes to his request, and I'm not sure why he would not take that as an answer.

Mr. Speaker, we've released all the information we've been asked to release, and lo and behold, the information just confirms what we've been saying all along. We've made an investment by way of a loan, that is 100% secure, to ensure that phase 2 of MaRS could continue and get built. It has been built. Now the key is to make sure it gets leased up. We've made an interjection in the transaction by buying out ARE to ensure that that can now happen.

I'm awaiting advice from Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson to determine what the next steps are, but they've told me that this project is not a failed project. Indeed, with their advice, we should be able to get it back onto a positive keel. I hope I'll have the member's support when we get to that point.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, this week is Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. In western Mississauga, we have an outstanding school that has done some groundbreaking work in creating an open, supportive and accepting learning environment for all students.

St. Joseph Secondary School in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board won a Premier's Award for Accepting Schools last year for its accomplishments in creating a gay-straight alliance formed by a group of students who wanted to connect in a safe space. In Mississauga, St. Joseph's has provided Ontario with a template for excellence in a productive learning environment.

Minister, what has Ontario done province-wide to help all students feel safe while learning?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to add my congratulations to St. Joseph Secondary School in Mississauga for winning the Premier's award.

During this week, I hope that everyone will take some time to consider the issue of bullying and the role it may be playing in their lives or the lives of others. Every student has the right to feel safe and accepted at school. If the students don't feel safe, they can't be at their very best.

That's why I'm so very proud of our government's Accepting Schools Act. The act requires boards to provide supports for the bully, the bullied and the bystander, and requires principals to investigate all reports of bullying. The government has invested over \$425 million in Safe Schools initiatives that are helping to make Ontario schools safe. We've defined bullying in legislation

and we are making great progress on the whole issue of bullying prevention.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Minister. St. Joseph school's work is led by its principal, Jeff Quenneville, whom I've come to know and respect. In fact, Jeff himself is one of this year's award winners for building an accepting school climate. The administration and staff at St. Joseph's have developed a healthy and respectful relationship among students throughout the entire school and in the surrounding community.

When this House considered bullying in Bill 13 last year, it saw that repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals does cause fear and distress. Bullying involves more than physical and verbal violence. It includes social and cyberbullying.

Minister, how is Ontario addressing cyberbullying in respect to kids, computers and cellphones?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member for this very important question.

Cyberbullying has been a concern of our government and the Safe Schools Action Team for a number of years. That's why the Accepting Schools Act explicitly defines cyberbullying as part of its definition of bullying.

If a principal believes that actions that occurred online had a negative impact on the school climate, the principal legally has the authority to take action. Ontario's actually pretty unique in that respect because we know that when students bully each other outside of school online and come into the school, they don't feel safe and then they can't succeed. We know that we need to have a way for principals and teachers to intervene in the cyberbullying and the life of the student so that we can ensure that schools are a safe and accepting place for all our students, and that we will not tolerate bullying.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Premier.

Municipalities are still waiting for the millions the government promised to help them clean up from last year's ice storm. They have yet to see a dime.

My question is this: How many thousands of dollars that should be going to municipalities for disaster relief are instead being spent on consulting fees?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I appreciate the question. Let me just try to bring as much clarity to it as quickly as I can. Our government, in response to some input from AMO and a number of communities that were stricken with difficulties—I think there were 53 that qualified—responded by putting in place a \$190-million fund that could be drawn upon.

We, of course, met with and provided training sessions for municipalities as to how to complete the accountability paperwork that was necessary. They're working very,

very hard at that. All of those sessions, by the way, were done internally by ministry staff. Sessions were done. Municipalities are processing their claims as quickly as they can. I'm pleased to say that as the paperwork comes in, we're releasing that money.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I didn't hear an answer there.

The Liberals hired a consulting firm, LandLink Consulting, to manage the process—so far with nothing to show for it. Now the government is telling municipal staff to register for a two-hour-long webinar just to learn how to fill out paperwork. Who is putting on the red tape webinar? LandLink. Who is in charge of reviewing the applications? LandLink. Who's paying for all this? Taxpayers. How much will it cost? The Liberals won't say.

Does the minister really have so little confidence in his own ministry that he would sign a secret deal with a private consulting firm? Or did he do it to evade accountability, like the Liberals did with eHealth and Ornge?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I just did a quick check with one of my colleagues here around consulting fees, and just adding to my answer, in 2001-02, the Progressive Conservatives, when they were in government, invested \$650 million in consultants. In the last three years, our figure is under \$300 million.

We're working hard to curb the hiring of separate consultants, doing the job internally and working very hard with municipalities around their needs—something that government didn't do a lot of when they were in power.

HEALTH CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. This government maintains that health care is not one of the ministries that will be cut by 6%, according to their budget. In my community of Hamilton Mountain, people are proud to be employed in health care, serving their neighbours who may need that care.

Lakeview Lodge is one of those places. It allows cancer patients receiving care at the world-class facility, the Juravinski Cancer Centre, to stay close by. They don't have to travel back and forth while they receive treatment that often makes them very sick. There, they receive immediate attention by trained medical staff on site—unionized staff—who can assess their needs and send them for emergency care at the nearby cancer centre if they need it. But now, Lakeview Lodge is slated to close, throwing cancer patients out to find lodging at area motels. My question is simple: Does the Premier think this is acceptable?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm happy to speak with the member opposite about this specific situation that she has described in Hamilton.

The accurate response to this question is that we are making massive and significant investments in health

care in our province, including in cancer care right across the province—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Including in Hamilton.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —and including in Hamilton, to the point where Cancer Care Ontario and our cancer prevention and treatment support system in this province is seen as among the best, if not the best, in the entire world.

I won't deny that there may be a local situation. I'm happy to speak with the member opposite to get a better understanding of precisely what her concerns are. But I think it's important that Ontarians understand the significant investments and what they're providing for the people in care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the minister was listening. I was talking about the facility next door.

The reason that we're told Lakeview must close is because of the freeze in hospital budgets in the last three years by this Liberal government, what the NDP and many others have said amounts to cuts in our health care system.

My constituents want to know what non-union, non-health care cleaning staff are supposed to do when a cancer patient becomes sick from chemotherapy. Will the people in these motels know how to handle and dispose of it properly? Now these patients will have to take cabs and ambulances back to the hospital if they're urgent, where before the on-site nurse would be able to respond.

Speaker, it's this government's policies that have shut down Lakeview Lodge. Is the Premier going to intervene to keep Lakeview open?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, this is a decision that was made by the local hospital.

It simply isn't true to talk about a lack of investments in our hospitals when in fact hospital operating budgets in the last 10 years in this province have gone up by an average of 50%.

We expect, in this particular case, as we would expect anywhere in the province, that the hospital and the LHIN that is supporting that hospital will continue to provide support to any changes made to the housing of patients, whether they be cancer patients or other patients who are in need of housing support. Again, I'm happy to talk with the member opposite.

We continue to support our hospitals. The funding has increased dramatically over the past decade. Changes are being made as we transfer more of that support into home and community care so that individuals can appropriately be cared for as close to home as possible.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Ma question s'adresse à la présidente du Conseil du Trésor.

Minister, I understand that the Ontario public service has once again been chosen one of Canada's top 100 employers for 2015. That's great news. I would like to

offer my congratulations to the Ontario public service, and in particular the members of the OPS who live in my riding of Burlington, who have served and continue to serve our province with unflinching dedication decade after decade.

I am proud to say that we have dedicated and committed individuals in our public service. It is an honour and a privilege to work with them. We rely on their advice, professionalism and expertise to help us make Ontario the best place to live, work and do business. They deliver vital services to our citizens in communities large and small and help propel this province forward.

Minister, can you please tell this House how it is that the OPS has been recognized once again with this great honour?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Burlington for this really important question.

Speaker, this award gives us a great opportunity to say thank you to the public servants in this province who work so hard for Ontarians every single day.

Being seen as a leading employer is important to attracting and retaining the best and the brightest for the OPS.

It's not the first time the OPS has won this prestigious award. In fact, it's the fifth time that the Ontario public service has been chosen a top 100 employer in Canada.

Transformation of our public services continues to move forward—to change the way public services are delivered in Ontario, to give Ontario families the best possible value for money and streamline access to the services that they need. We're counting on our public service to drive that change. We have the best public service in the world, and I'm very proud to work with them every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Minister. I agree, as, I'm sure, would every member of this House who has worked with the extraordinary, talented and dedicated members of our public service. We can't say enough about the important work they do and the significant contribution they make to our province. The OPS is instrumental in creating and implementing the policies and programs that Ontarians rely on, and we are thrilled that their achievements are being recognized and commended as a model employer.

I imagine there is stiff competition amongst employers to be chosen for one of these awards, which I understand were announced in the *Globe and Mail* two weeks ago. Minister, could you please enlighten us on just how the OPS was selected for this honour and what criteria are used to choose the top employers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to provide a little background. Each year, an organization, Mediacorp, conducts research into the recruitment histories of more than 80,000 employers across Canada. Then they invite 35,000 organizations to apply for Canada's Top 100 Employers competition. So 80,000 employers, and we were chosen in the top 100.

Participants provide a detailed description of their operations and HR practices, including key areas such as

the physical workplace, the work atmosphere, health, diversity, environmental leadership, assisting recent immigrants, charitable efforts and community involvement. Winners are selected based on comparisons to other organizations within their respective sectors, and I am delighted to say that Western University was also chosen as a top 100 employer.

The OPS has led and will continue to lead by example to set the highest standards possible for other employers to emulate. These prestigious awards acknowledge those accomplishments.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday, in a friendly Liberal question, you said, "By playing games, the opposition is delaying implementing safety measures for our children."

I know I've asked questions in this House; many of us have. We have participated in rallies across the province. We have asked for committee travel to Ontario's municipalities. I have met with the Ombudsman. We have started petitions in opposition to the flawed Bill 10, and we will propose amendments to Bill 10. And finally, we have answered hundreds of letters and emails that your members ignored.

Minister, we have done our job as the official opposition. You, on the other hand, have simply time-allocated debate and committee time on this very important yet very flawed bill. So, Minister, can you explain to the House and to the people of Ontario exactly what games we are playing, and will you stand in your place and do the honourable thing and actually apologize for such a rude comment?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, certainly, and I'm very—I'm very proud of Bill 10, because Bill 10, for the first time ever, gives our ministry, gives my inspectors, the authority to deal with unlicensed child care violations.

Now, I want to make it clear: Unlicensed home child care is totally legitimate and part of the child care scenario in Ontario, and we expect it to stay that way. But what we do want to do is make sure that no matter what form of child care someone chooses, be it a child care centre or home care, either licensed or unlicensed, that every single form of child care in Ontario is safe. If people break the rules, my inspectors will, under Bill 10, have the authority to deal with it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, Mr. Speaker, she didn't say anything about us playing games, but she said it yesterday in a friendly question.

Minister, you proudly mentioned your Ottawa meeting last Friday. I know as a fact that participants from the independent child care providers had no idea that you would attend that meeting. It was to be the Ottawa area Liberal MPPs only. It was a surprise that you were in attendance. I guess you just happened to fly into the area. But let's face it: You kept it a secret from the public be-

cause you knew that it would draw a demonstration double the size of the 300-plus who rallied outside of your office in Guelph on November 9. That was the day you just drove by.

So, Minister, who is really playing games: the official opposition or the Minister of Education who has not the courage to face and speak to people on a badly flawed Bill 10?

1120

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member just demonstrated games-playing: Some woman with brown hair in a brown car drove by my office. Has anybody ever seen me? I have white hair. That's games.

However, I was really excited to visit with home care providers and the Child Care Providers Resource Network in Ottawa. I actually think it was a great opportunity for me to have a calm, private conversation where we were actually able to sit down and discuss the issues. I think that's what a minister, or any other MPP, needs to do, which is to sit down and calmly discuss issues.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The gridlock crisis is getting even worse in Thunder Bay regional hospital. There have been too many patients and too few beds over 85% of this year. In fact, the hospital declared gridlock for almost four months straight this year. Every day that it operates, 36 unfunded beds are being operated to meet the needs of the residents, Speaker—beds that receive no funding at all from this Liberal government.

Does the Premier think it's acceptable to leave Thunder Bay hospital stuck in gridlock?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, of course not, and we're not leaving them to deal with this challenge on their own. In fact, I recently was in Thunder Bay joined by two members, the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North and the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan—great members who are very concerned about the situation of health care in their localities, as they should be. We're making important progress. The hospital itself acknowledges, and acknowledged in that meeting, that we are making progress with dealing with the challenges that they are facing.

In fact, it was not that long ago this year that we announced an additional \$14 million specifically to deal with the challenges faced by Thunder Bay regional hospital, the kinds of pressures that the leader of the third party has indicated. This additional funding specifically is going to support not just one institution in Thunder Bay, but the three largest health care providers—the regional health sciences centre, St. Joseph's Care Group and North West Community Care Access Centre—to solve these problems.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, according to Thunder Bay regional hospital, it will take years for the gridlock

problem to be fixed with the current level of funding that they are receiving from this Liberal government. The hospital says it is “experiencing an erosion”—an erosion—“of its ability to meet its acute care service mandate.” That's a disgrace, Speaker. Thunder Bay regional hospital is being stretched to the limit because this government simply will not fix the problem.

Premier, exactly how many more years will the people of Thunder Bay have to wait for this Liberal government to fix the gridlock crisis at their hospital?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are fixing the challenges faced by Thunder Bay regional hospital. I know the member perhaps doesn't agree with this, but we are giving them precisely what they asked for. That \$14 million of funding is helping them recruit up to 10 full-time and 14 temporary emergency room doctors to improve access to urgent care, staff 10 new acute care hospital beds to treat up to 600 more patients per year, expand a nurse outreach program to provide up to 500 more seniors and people with complex needs with home care, create 26 new hospital beds to help more people with long-term illness or disabilities receive care and fund up to 17 more spaces in supportive housing to help our seniors and people in need of care remain independent.

Of course, there is always more work to be done, but we're actually working in coordination and collaboration with the regional hospital and with the local MPPs. It's working; we're making progress. I hope that the member of the third party realizes that.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Yesterday, my federal counterpart from Ottawa South questioned the federal government on their commitment to the Ring of Fire. The question underscored its national importance. It was alarming to hear the federal Minister of Natural Resources attempt to defend the federal government's absence on the development of the Ring of Fire.

All members of this House recognize the importance of the Ring of Fire to Ontario's economy and understand that the development is a project of national significance. Will the Minister of Northern Development and Mines please share how our government is stepping up to the plate and showing real leadership in the absence of the federal government, who would rather be on the sidelines?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you to the member from Ottawa South for the question. I will acknowledge that I was startled, if not somewhat irritated, by the stunningly inaccurate comments that were made by Minister Rickford in the House of Commons yesterday. Let me once again be very clear about our absolute commitment to the Ring of Fire as we are leading to drive development in that extraordinarily important economic development opportunity, despite a lack of any similar commitment from the federal government.

We've been absolutely clear in our \$1-billion commitment to develop transportation infrastructure. We have established the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp.—we're working with our partners to move that forward—and we've reached an historic framework agreement with the Matawa First Nation.

When the federal government says they're waiting for us to demonstrate that this is an actual priority, that is nothing but an excuse—an excuse for their complete lack of commitment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: The minister has made it clear that the Ring of Fire is indeed a priority for our government, highlighted in our most recent budget and last week's fall economic statement. The Ring of Fire is an incredible opportunity for communities across this province and across Canada—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: —and while I appreciate the words of encouragement, we'd all be farther ahead if they directed them toward their federal cousins.

The Premier has made it clear that our government is committed to leading the way on this project, with mineral potential worth up to \$60 billion.

Can the minister please share how our government recognizes the need to work collaboratively with all parties when it comes to infrastructure development in the region?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The heckling from the other side of the House is pretty interesting because I think it shows their embarrassment about the fact that they're not willing to stand up to the federal government—

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We understand how important the infrastructure is in terms of access to the Ring of Fire. The development corporation itself is another significant step towards building it. We're working very closely with First Nations, we're working closely with industry and we're working with communities across the province so that we can find the best way to tap into this extraordinary potential in the Ring of Fire.

We are going to continue to move forward, with the support of the Premier and all of us on this side of the House, to make sure that this project moves forward. It's time the federal government stepped up to the plate with their funding so that we can signal that not only Ontario, but Canada is actually is open for business.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Health: I'm proposing legislation to better enable Ontario to deal with emerging infectious diseases—West Nile, Lyme, Ebola. There seems to be much work to be done on many fronts: diagnosis, treatment, prevention. The treatment of Lyme disease, for example, is fraught with conflicting medical, scientific, political and social dimensions, disputes that are long overdue for resolution.

Social media has been accused of politicizing the issue, communicating inaccurate information, pitching

dubious, sometimes expensive, treatment. There are also allegations of shortcomings in the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme directed at mainstream medicine.

Minister, we have government for a reason. Are there no adequate mechanisms in place to deal with some of these disputes?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. In fact, the opposite is true. There are many measures, policies and procedures in place. The member opposite knows that this government and my ministry are not only committed to protecting the people of Ontario from vector-borne and zoonotic diseases, but we have effective policies and programs for all of the items that the member opposite mentioned: surveillance, prevention, control of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, including promoting, importantly, the public awareness of these diseases and also emergency preparedness.

1130

I appreciate the timeliness of the member's private member's bill because of the preparations that have been under way for quite some time in terms of Ebola preparedness. But you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, being a public health specialist myself, with significant expertise precisely in these areas, I look at these policies and procedures and I look at them with great scrutiny.

I'm happy to continue in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Minister. Over the past several months, I've developed legislation attempting to use a neutral, objective, science-based, research-based approach to emerging diseases like Ebola and Lyme. I am calling on your ministry to legislate a provincial framework, an action plan, encompassing surveillance, educational materials, as well as guidelines for prevention, identification, diagnosis, treatment and management, including emergency preparedness and sharing best practices.

The private member's bill comes up this afternoon. It mandates research, as well as collaboration, consultation with all concerned—and in particular with the public. Not many people know what's going on. They get information from websites and CNN, but there's a bit of a gap.

Minister, there presently is no legislation requiring all of this. Are there any reasons why you would not support such an approach?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I welcome the private member's bill. In fact, I'll be participating in the debate about it later this afternoon. I can't speak for my colleagues, but I will be supporting the bill this afternoon. But I do want to say, just so there's no confusion or anxiety out there, that largely the reason that I can support it is because everything that Bill 27 is proposing is already in place to protect the people of Ontario from vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

I sincerely want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for bringing this forward. I'm looking forward to the discussion and the debate. Quite frankly, we can always do more, so our government is very open to

having discussions on how to continue to improve the surveillance, the prevention and the control of our vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Premier, the latest report from Ed Clark says that there is a market for the Ontario Power Generation's assets like the smaller hydroelectric stations in Niagara Falls.

Despite how important they are to the Niagara region and their place in the city of Niagara Falls, the latest from Ed Clark implies they will be selling these stations to private buyers. Can the Premier elaborate on Ed Clark's report and tell the people of Niagara if the government is planning on selling their hydroelectric stations?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The simple answer is no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, that's good.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I was just trying to figure out how much time I've got left to figure this out, so I'm good.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not very much.

Mr. Wayne Gates: But I am going to ask the last part of the question, just so we can get that "no" more than once.

Once again, I'd like to know if the Premier is intending on selling these stations and, if so, when you were planning on consulting with the people of Niagara? I'd like to hear that answer again. Thank you very much.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm going to say it very simply again: No.

Now we get to ask a question.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, if you were to drive down a street in my riding, it wouldn't be unusual to see farms and fields on one side of the road and subdivisions and box stores on the other side. That's because Halton is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. In fact, the town of Milton has been the fastest-growing municipality in Canada for close to five years.

But with that remarkable growth in such a short period of time come congestion, traffic jams and infrastructure challenges. These challenges put undue stress on people's lives and our economy.

Investing in infrastructure is one of the most important things we can do to improve our quality of life and jump-start our economy so communities can move forward. I know that as part of the 2014 budget, our government created an infrastructure fund for small, rural and northern municipalities. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please update the House on this new roads and bridges fund?

Hon. Jeff Leal: That truly was a very impressive question from the member from Halton. I might add that my brother and sister-in-law are actually residents; they live in Milton, Ontario, and Gordon Krantz, who just got elected again, is one of the outstanding mayors in Ontario.

More importantly, we have a 10-year economic plan that's investing \$130 billion in infrastructure, making communities in the Halton region grow each and every day. A key step in our 2014 budget is the delivery of the \$100-million infrastructure program for small, rural and northern municipalities. We built that program in co-operation with the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, ROMA, and all those partners to make this a great success.

The member from Halton is doing an outstanding job in getting those investments in her community in the region of Halton, one of the outstanding areas in the province of Ontario.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin has a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, Karen Cameron, who is the executive director for the Independent School Bus Operators Association. I look forward to having lunch with you, along with our critic, to discuss business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I better acknowledge this one: the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. Although I introduced them earlier, they weren't right here, so if everyone could just turn and wave at my dad up in the gallery there, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Did you ever send her home without supper?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I could have taken bets on some kind of comment.

Thank you for that warm welcome of our visitors.

DEFERRED VOTES

FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et

d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats.

On November 19, Madame Meilleur moved third reading of Bill 15. All those in favour, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Kiwaia, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	McMahon, Eleanor	Wong, Soo
Elliott, Christine	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fedell, Victor	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Zimmer, David
Fraser, John	Miller, Norm	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Campbell, Sarah	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Fife, Catherine	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
Forster, Cindy	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 71; the nays are 18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Welcome to all the students.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure to introduce members just coming into the east gallery today.

From the Ontario Lung Association we have Andrea Stevens-Lavigne, Sherry Zarins, Vicki Poulos, Connie Choy, George Habib, Chris Yaccato and Anthony Alfred joining me today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AIR CADETS

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in this House today to congratulate the 844 Norseman Royal Canadian Air Cadets squadron. Based in Huntsville in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, the cadets were selected as the top squadron in Ontario for 2014.

This prestigious honour was based on a number of criteria, including attendance, number of cadets in the squadron, completion of training and levels of success. Along with the 50 exceptional individuals, I would also like to commend Commanding Officer Adam Smith; Deputy Commanding Officer Mel Wordragen; Training Officer Second Lieutenant Brenda Chikoski; the assistant supply officer, Officer Cadet Brad Gondos; as well as the civilian staff and the volunteers whose hard work and dedication all contributed to this accomplishment.

Since being formed in 1976, the cadets have served to allow youth from Huntsville and surrounding area the opportunity to develop leadership, responsibility, discipline and confidence. This is the first time that the 844 Norseman squadron has received such recognition. It is truly a great achievement for these young men and women.

I look forward to the results of nation-wide voting and wish you the best of luck to potentially be awarded the top squadron in Canada.

DANN BOUZIDE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Many of us are still feeling the glow from the tremendous outpouring of support at our local Remembrance Day celebrations. Today, I'd like to tell you about a special person in my riding of Windsor-Tecumseh.

Dann Bouzide is the son of a veteran. For the past 13 years, Dann has hosted an annual Veterans Appreciation Day banquet. Veterans eat free. More than 700 people attend and enjoy great food at Windsor's Serbian Centre and museum. As president of the Windsor Historical Society, Dann and his team of volunteers, led by Second World War naval veteran Larry Costello, have been recording the personal stories of our local veterans through the veterans' memorial project. Veterans record their military experiences, real-life tales from the trenches, on the high seas, or in the air.

Speaker, this project is called Take a Glimpse into the Eyes of History, and the goal is to provide a DVD copy for every high-school history class in Canada. It's an ambitious undertaking. For these and other deeds, Dann Bouzide was recently awarded a commendation for

exemplary service to veterans. It was presented by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Julian Fantino.

To Dann Bouzide, his family and all of the volunteers at the Windsor Historical Society, I say: a job well done, thank you very much, and a salute from the Ontario Legislature.

FOOD4KIDS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It's a pleasure to rise today to tell you about a very special program I recently dropped into in Halton. Food4Kids is an incredible organization dedicated to feeding hungry kids. This program started with an idea: to develop a weekend food program for at-risk children in the Halton and Hamilton areas. Research showed that there were dozens of children in Halton and Hamilton who were going without adequate food over the weekend, and so an idea was born to help those little ones.

It's simple. It all starts with plastic bags and boxes of food to fill those bags. Here's how it works: Every Thursday afternoon, staff and volunteers gather at the Food4Kids offices. In the backroom are boxes filled with fresh fruit, healthy snacks and juice boxes. On the evening I was there, each of us picked up a bag, filled it with one item of food from each of the boxes and then sealed the bag and dropped it off into a bin. We did this over and over again for several hours. In very little time, we had managed to stuff over 140 bags with an assortment of fresh fruit and vegetables, along with a mixture of the healthy snacks.

Once filled, the packages are distributed to local schools every Friday morning for needy kids. The unmarked bags are then placed directly into students' backpacks. They are the only ones to know that they are receiving assistance.

Mr. Speaker, as a mother of two, I can't explain how good it felt to be helping these children.

These kids need support, and I'm pleased to say that organizations like Food4Kids are getting them help. Today the organization successfully provides assistance to hundreds of youngsters aged five to 14 in the Halton, Hamilton and Niagara regions.

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Jim McDonnell: November 20 is Universal Children's Day, which marks the adoption of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

In Ontario, we can pride ourselves on many achievements to fulfill our obligations under the convention. Our children have access to a name, a citizenship, free health and education, and protection from abuse, exploitation, labour and conscription. But much more can be done.

Under the convention, governments must support parents, especially when both are in the workforce. Recent changes to daycare provision will make parents' jobs even harder, as the proposed bill will result in the loss of

over 140,000 daycare spaces. The convention grants children the right to care, to be fostered and to be adopted, yet many in Ontario fall through the cracks. Children with a disability in Ontario wait on long lists to have the special care suited to their needs. For families, escaping the poverty cycle is still a great challenge. The social assistance system needs to do more for poor children.

It is incumbent upon the current government to see that these rights become more than a place on a waiting list. Dedicated, stable funding to service providers and a real focus on local, cost-effective solutions will help make children's rights truly universal.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm speaking today on a topic that is extremely important to our democracy. Any person living in the province has the right to have fair legal representation, to have a trial, to be represented and to make their case. Yet today we see how expensive legal defence can be. Some people feel like going to a lawyer is not an option.

In my riding of Niagara Falls, in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie, a lot of people have lost their jobs. I speak with these people every day. They're not bad people. They're smart. They're dedicated. They're hard-working. Through no fault of their own, they're out of work.

Legal aid has been providing the people of this province the chance to be represented when they've fallen on hard times. Yet as the need for these services grows, the support for legal aid has not.

I'm proud to announce that my office in Niagara Falls, which, again, is servicing Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, will be partnering with Legal Aid Ontario to offer those services to the constituents of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake at my office. I hope this helps people access rights that they're entitled to, and I hope one day soon we can come up with a true jobs plan to put people back to work so they never need to use legal aid again.

1310

JOUR DE L'INDÉPENDANCE DU LIBAN

LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

M. John Fraser: Je suis ravi de me lever dans l'Assemblée aujourd'hui pour célébrer la journée de l'indépendance du Liban. I rise today in recognition of Lebanese Independence Day, which is this Saturday, November 22. I had the honour of joining Premier Kathleen Wynne and many of my colleagues at the official flag-raising ceremony today at Queen's Park, where we celebrated that proud occasion in 1943.

The establishment of the modern state of Lebanon was a profound moment for its people, the fulfillment of a hard-fought dream to be a sovereign nation.

Ontario is proud to be home to a dynamic Lebanese-Canadian community, a community that has contributed

immensely to our social, cultural and economic life and has strengthened our ties with Lebanon.

My riding of Ottawa South is home to thousands of Lebanese-Canadian families that enrich our community through many aspects of their culture. A perfect example of this is the Ottawa Lebanese Festival that's hosted by St. Elias Cathedral each summer in my riding. The festival welcomes families from all over Ontario and Ottawa to Ottawa South to celebrate the rich traditions and delicious cuisine that the Lebanese people share with our province.

Ils enrichissent notre communauté et je les remercie pour leurs contributions.

I'd like to congratulate the Lebanese people all across Ontario on this special occasion and thank them for their contributions to our great province. Merci.

MURRAY GREENE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to recognize Exeter resident and veteran Murray Greene for his dedicated service during the Second World War. This past August, Mr. Greene was awarded the rank of Knight of the French National Order of the Legion of Honour. This award is the highest decoration provided by France and was awarded to Mr. Greene for his role in helping the liberation of France during the Second World War.

Last Tuesday evening, on Remembrance Day, I had the honour of recognizing Mr. Greene for his award in his community at the Royal Canadian Legion, branch 167, in Exeter.

Mr. Greene first enlisted in the army in Ontario during September 1942. He then joined the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry in England, where he made his way over to France. A corporal in the army, Mr. Greene bravely fought alongside his compatriots in the trenches, often enduring nightly shelling. He did not return home to Canada until after the war was over.

This should remind us of how very important it is that we continue to remember and recognize the bravery, excellence and determination of Canada's veterans such as Mr. Murray Greene, as well as today's soldiers who continue to dedicate their lives for our freedoms and our security. It is their selfless commitment that has afforded us the peace, freedom and prosperity we enjoy today.

VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Recently, I had an opportunity to attend a Sisters in Spirit Vigil held in my community to raise awareness about missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

As per reports, there are at least 1,181 missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada. The numbers are staggering. Too many families have lost daughters, sisters, mothers and grandmothers. The rate of violence against aboriginal women is troubling, particularly in a society and a country which claim to be civil and the best in the world. No woman should have to live

with the fear of violence and worrying that they may be the next victim.

Violence against women, particularly against aboriginal women, is not just an Ontario issue. It is a national issue that affects Canadians of all backgrounds from coast to coast. I call upon the federal government to hold an open-ended public inquiry so that we can find out the root cause of these heinous crimes and have a permanent solution.

LUNG DISEASE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: November is lung health awareness month, and I would like to bring your attention to the prominence of lung disease in our province. Most people are either in one of two camps: one, you can breathe without thinking about it; and the other, every single breath is a struggle. Think about it—every single breath.

More than 2.4 million people in Ontario—that's one in five—live with chronic lung disease, such as asthma, lung cancer or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. Lung cancer kills more than breast, ovarian, colon and prostate cancer combined.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure, along with MPP Thompson from Huron-Bruce, to receive a spirometry test at Women's College Hospital, a simple breathing test that calculates the amount of air that can be blown out of the lungs and the rate at which it can be expelled. This test can identify the disease in the early stages when treatments are far more effective.

The same test will be available for all members here on Tuesday night, November 25, thanks to the Ontario lung health association. The association is also organizing walk-in spirometry clinics in partnerships with health care facilities and centres across the province. Don't miss it. It's extremely important. As many of you know, the greatest cause of lung cancer is smoking.

Be proactive with your lung health.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LEARNING THROUGH WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'APPRENTISSAGE PAR L'EXPÉRIENCE EN MILIEU DE TRAVAIL

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act to establish the Advisory Council on Work-Integrated Learning / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités pour créer le Conseil consultatif de l'apprentissage intégré au travail.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for a short statement?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The bill amends the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act to establish the Advisory Council on Work-Integrated Learning, which includes co-ops, placements, internships and more. The council's members are appointed by the minister from various groups who represent employers, post-secondary students, post-secondary institutions, economic development officials and others.

In general, the council's mandate is to advise the minister on increasing employer awareness of the benefits of work-integrated learning; encouraging more employers to provide paid work-integrated learning and improving oversight of unpaid work-integrated learning; supporting institutions in delivering effective work-integrated learning; and ensuring that qualified students who are interested in participating in work-integrated learning are able to do so.

The mandate also includes making recommendations with respect to a website to share information about work-integrated learning opportunities in Ontario. The bill requires the council to report annually on Ontario's progress in this area.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT
ACT (CLEARING VEHICLES
OF SNOW AND ICE), 2014
LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(ENLÈVEMENT DE LA NEIGE
ET DE LA GLACE DES VÉHICULES)

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit driving a motor vehicle on a highway with a dangerous accumulation of snow or ice / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin d'interdire la conduite sur une voie publique de véhicules automobiles ayant une accumulation dangereuse de neige ou de glace.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for a short statement.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit driving a motor vehicle on a highway if snow or ice has accumulated on the motor vehicle, or on a vehicle or trailer drawn by the motor vehicle, in a manner that would pose a danger to other motor vehicles on the highway.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL HOUSING DAY

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to stand in my place today in the Legislature to mark National Housing

Day, which officially occurs this Saturday, November 22. National Housing Day recognizes the importance of people having a house to call a home. Stable, permanent housing improves a person's health and the prospects of acquiring a good education and a decent job.

When it comes to affordable housing, we as a government have taken action we can be proud of. Since 2003, our government has invested more than \$4 billion in affordable housing. This investment has provided real, positive change that has improved the lives of many vulnerable people in Ontario.

But, at the very same time, National Housing Day is a time to reflect on how much more work we have in front of us, because the challenges are real and the challenges are growing. We need a bold transformation in the way we tackle the need for affordable housing in Ontario. I believe that we need to keep looking for ways to innovate and to look at alternative approaches that increase our supply of affordable housing units. I want to give thanks to certain members of this assembly who have taken the time to share some very good ideas that we are considering.

We are exploring every opportunity to increase affordability, including more options for lower- and moderate-income households. This means looking at ways to engage with the private sector to get them on board. We're committed to building these strong partnerships in support of social and affordable housing.

The Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Program is a key part of Ontario's poverty reduction strategy. This past August, I joined the federal government in signing a renewal of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Program.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's good.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Yes, it was good. We committed to another \$800 million in provincial and federal funding for housing over the next five years. These funds go directly towards building and repairing affordable housing units and provide rental and down-payment assistance to households in need. This includes approximately 1,000 new supportive housing spaces to help Ontarians with mental illness and addiction issues, as part of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy—you may remember the working group we had, all members of the Legislature.

I'm pleased that the federal government has officially extended its commitment to the affordable housing program, but, despite this announcement, the federal government's funding for existing social housing continues to decline each year. We need a federal commitment—one that includes the creation of new affordable housing opportunities and maintains our existing social housing units. I can't think of anything better to aspire toward on National Housing Day than a collaborative, real national housing strategy.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Absolutely.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Right on. We have a shared sense of purpose there. Amen, brother. Amen.

The demand for social housing is growing, and federal funds are gradually declining from about \$500 million a

year, as it was a few years ago, to nothing by 2033. That's why we're urging the federal government to return to the table as a long-term housing partner.

Mr. Speaker, in honour of National Housing Day, I want to reaffirm our government's commitment to provide long-term, predictable funding for affordable housing that works for the people of Ontario. We will continue to work collaboratively with our municipal partners, other provinces, all members of this assembly, the territories and hopefully the federal government, as well as the private sector, to improve housing outcomes for the people of our beloved province. We are committed to building those strong partnerships in favour of social and affordable housing.

Let's find ways to work together to build Ontario up. Together, we can increase home affordability and make the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens much better than they are at the moment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Responses?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to National Housing Day.

We understand how important it is for people to have a place that they can call home; a place where they can raise their families. But there are many people in Ontario who worry every day about getting evicted because they can't pay their rent; people who worry that they will lose their homes because they can't afford the cost; or worse, people who are worried about where they are going to sleep tonight. Imagine how hard it would be to try to get a job if you don't have a place to live. Imagine how difficult it would be to have hope.

As a Conservative, I believe the government's job is both to create opportunities for people to succeed and to help those in need.

This government has been in power now for 11 years. Over that time, they've made many commitments to housing. But the truth is, today it feels like minus 11 outside and there are still people living on the street, there is a significant backlog of repairs needed in existing affordable housing stock, and there are many seniors and families who have found themselves unable to afford to keep their houses because of the increased cost of living in Ontario.

Despite all their commitments, the government seems to be more interested in pointing fingers at the federal government than actually achieving and tracking their goals.

In 2003, this government committed to build 20,000 units in four years. In 2006, when I asked about their progress, they were already blaming the federal government, but they said they would still hit their goal. Today, seven years after it should have been completed, the number of units listed on their website puts them almost 3,000 short of their goal.

In 2010, this government issued the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, which said one of the provincial responsibilities was to provide "annual reports on province-wide progress." But four years later, we

haven't seen a single annual report from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. When the legislative library called to request them, they were told by the ministry that they weren't produced because there seems to be no agreement on the data.

The ministry was supposed to track the Ontario Housing Measure, but the only place you can find it on the government's website are the multiple times that they made the same promise.

They announced a goal to end homelessness but with no timeline.

The truth is that since this government was elected, the wait-list for affordable housing has increased. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association operates 163,000 units and now has 165,069 people on the wait-list. That wait-list has increased by almost 40,000 people since this government was elected.

Today the backlog for affordable housing stock repairs is so large that some units are simply being boarded up because they can't be lived in and they can't afford to fix them. Mr. Speaker, the cost to repair these units is less than the cost of building new ones, which means that for the same investment, they could help more families, but this government refuses to give organizations the flexibility in the investment in affordable housing program that they need to make the capital investments in these repairs.

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Ontario families are looking to their government for solutions. It's not enough to point fingers.

Instead of spending time focusing on the federal government, I ask the minister to report back to this Legislature on what they've actually accomplished. Instead of pointing fingers, I ask the minister to put together a plan to implement the affordable housing recommendation contained in the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions report; to put together a plan to reduce the long waiting lists that are as much as 10 years and are increasing; and to put together a plan to address the massive backlog of repairs in the housing stock, including the estimated 7,000 homes owned by Toronto Community Housing that will deteriorate into critical condition in the next five years, to make sure that you don't end up with more units that are simply boarded up because they can't afford to be repaired.

That's what all these families who are depending on social housing need and expect from their government.

Ms. Cindy Forster: National Housing Day is an important reminder to all of us about the role that safe and affordable housing plays in eliminating the cycle of poverty.

As Ontario's need for affordable housing grows, we need to ensure that there is a plan in place to provide adequate housing. But when we look at the government's record on affordable housing, it is clear that they've failed to address this pressing need. It has been 11 years since they were elected, and we still see the wait-lists increasing.

Since 2004, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association has reported on the number of households waiting

for rent-geared-to-income in Ontario. The list has grown by 38,000 in 10 years. This is a direct result of the lack of investment or setting of targets for affordable housing units for low-income people who are deeply in need.

Ontario's housing lists grew by more than 4%. In 2014, 165,000 households were on the waiting list for rent-geared-to-income housing. That was more than a 4% increase over the year before.

Families wait the longest, unfortunately. In 2013, the average wait time for a family was 3.89 years, a notable increase from 3.2 in 2012. On average, families experienced the longest wait—4.14 years—while seniors and single adults wait as long as 3.72 years. The government needs to fix this.

Local governments are responsible for the delivery of rent-geared-to-income, but they can't do it alone. They've come up with a number of innovative ways since housing was downloaded by our friends on the right here years ago. But Ontarians are facing a real affordable housing crisis, and solving that crisis will require a long-term commitment by both the federal and provincial governments.

Last October 27, municipal incumbents were elected—they're about to be inaugurated—and we have a federal election coming up. I think that those candidates as well need to turn their minds to affordable housing in this province.

The Ontario Co-op Housing Federation is here year after year, and they've been asking the province to help with respect to negotiating with the feds to make sure that those rent subsidies continue to be in place for co-op housing. I don't see any action actually happening on that, but it needs to start to happen. It's going to be a real problem, and we're going to have more people sitting on wait-lists.

Last year, I introduced a private member's bill, and it was to provide everyone in this province with rent controls. Any building that is built after 1991 is exempt from rent controls. That's unfortunate; that has to stop. I will introduce that bill again this year. We have tens of thousands of vulnerable people in this province who are being charged very high rent increases and unjustified rent increases. We need to fix this. Some 45% of tenants in Ontario pay more than 30% of their income on rent, and a full 20% pay more than 50% of their income on rent.

After I deliver this response, my caucus and I will meet with Campaign 2000 today. In fact, they're in my office today to talk about poverty and housing issues in this province. Actually, their first question to me in my office today was why housing and community and social services are not under one ministry, because certainly they cross paths every day.

I hope that National Housing Day actually reminds the government of this pressing issue for more affordable housing. It's clear that it's not been a priority for the last 11 years. We've had three different ministers in the three short years that I've been here.

There's a number of things the government can do. They can look at the vacancy decontrol piece for renters,

so that when somebody is leaving a rent-geared-to-income unit, landlords aren't bumping up the rates. We know that when there is affordable housing, it decreases health care costs, it decreases policing costs, it decreases corrections costs, and all of those funds could actually be flowed into making more affordable housing in this province.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It's time for petitions.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I have a point of order. I would like to make an introduction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order, not petitions.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: We have in our gallery Chris Yaccatto, Anthony Alfred, George Habib, Connie Choy, Vicki Poulos, Sherry Zarins and Andrea Stevens-Lavigne—all from the Ontario Lung Association. I would like to welcome them to our gallery. It's wonderful that you're here today. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Laurie Scott: A Lyme disease petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic

and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I’ll sign my name to this and hand it to page Vida.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

“Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults battling this catastrophic disease;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients of atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

Speaker, I agree with this petition. I’ll affix my name to it and give it to page Kate to bring up to the desk.

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LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for

acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I absolutely agree with this petition. I’ll affix my name and send it to the desk with Mikaila.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.”

I totally agree with this petition as well. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with Joshua.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

LUNG HEALTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SANTÉ PULMONAIRE

Mrs. McGarry moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease / *Projet de loi 41, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie pulmonaire et visant l’élaboration d’un plan d’action provincial à l’égard des maladies pulmonaires.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I rise today to speak to my private member’s bill, An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease. It’s appropriate that we stand today to debate this bill in the House, as November is Lung Month.

I want to begin by once again welcoming and acknowledging the many stakeholders who are in the gallery today and who have actually been introduced twice. We recognize these individuals along with many others who work tirelessly to advocate for all Ontarians—and their families—who suffer from a variety of lung diseases. I can fully appreciate the fact that they are here in support of this bill, and they were here in the House as I introduced it yesterday as well. I want to acknowledge

the hard work they've done as lung health partners in assisting with this bill.

It takes collaboration amongst our many partners concerned with lung health issues to make changes to reduce the risk of developing lung disease. The Ontario Lung Association and their many partners involved in lung health have done tremendous work in advocating for legislative changes over these years, making a significant difference in lung health for all Ontarians.

Speaker, this past spring I went to the Run aLung event in my riding of Cambridge. It was created for Kayla Baker, an extraordinary teenager who had battled cancer, then pulmonary fibrosis, had received a double lung transplant at the last minute, then lost her fight to regain her health. Her story touched our entire community and many did the five-kilometre run in support of her.

After the run I met with her mother, Susan Tremblett, to discuss our shared experiences about raising children who needed a double lung transplant. My own son Rory was fortunate that he narrowly avoided a lung transplant, as his lung health improved enough during extensive treatment in hospital for his lung disease. I promised Susan that if I were elected I would do everything in my power to try to influence health policy in Ontario regarding lung health and to continue to raise awareness about lung health, the importance of prevention of lung-related diseases, and promote the importance of organ donation in Ontario.

It was actually at this event that I first met George Habib, the president and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association, who is here today. We spoke at length about our shared concerns, shared passion for improving lung health for Ontarians and shared vision for the government to look at any new legislation through a lung health lens. He asked me to sign the 4 Lung Years Pledge as a candidate in this past June 12 provincial election. I promised that, if elected, I would not only support a comprehensive lung health action plan for Ontario, but that I would present it as my private member's bill. Today, I'm very proud to keep that promise.

Speaker, this bill seeks to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council for the purpose of making recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care regarding research, prevention and treatment of lung disease, and would raise lung health awareness about the risk factors that contribute to developing lung disease.

Chronic disease continues to be a growing economic burden on Ontario's health care system, and lung disease accounts for a significant and disproportionate portion of these costs. Lung disease is a leading cause of health care utilization, including hospitalizations, emergency department visits and admissions. Currently in Ontario, there are more than 2.4 million people living with a serious lung disease, including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD, lung cancer, pulmonary fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension and cystic fibrosis. This represents approximately one in five of all Ontarians. The current direct and indirect cost to the Ontario economy of these three diseases is estimated to be more than \$4

billion and is anticipated to grow by a whopping \$310 billion in 30 years. However, there are currently available solutions that could be implemented immediately. Prevention, early diagnosis and treatment can lead to positive health outcomes.

Better care in the community can and does prevent emergency department and hospital visits, admissions and re-admissions, as I well know as a former care co-ordinator for the CCAC. Our community team of health professionals was able to intervene with several patients many times on my caseload to prevent further hospital admissions.

Unfortunately, lung disease does not currently get the same attention as other chronic diseases and illnesses in Ontario. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of all deaths in the province, from cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung diseases and diabetes, only lung disease is without a dedicated, coordinated, province-wide effort to minimize the health and economic burden of the disease. Health Quality Ontario plainly states that where there is a "clear strategy to improve results," progress, such as a reduction in expensive hospitalizations and better quality of life, follows. A coordinated and integrated approach to advancing Ontario's lung health is very necessary.

Caring for countless patients of all ages with breathing problems and lung disease for over 30 years as a nurse led to a lifelong concern about lung health and a passion, for me, to try to influence health care policy to improve factors that affect it.

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The feeling of being breathless is one of the most frightening experiences anyone can describe. Years ago in the emergency department one afternoon, a nursing colleague of mine was admitted with an acute asthma attack, with such little breath that he was unable to speak. The panic in his blue-tinged face was alarming. He was pulling off the oxygen mask that touched his face, as he felt he was suffocating, and he was thrashing around so much that it was difficult to provide the care and the life-saving treatments he urgently required. With calm and very swift care by our whole emergency team and a great deal of one-on-one reassurance, we were able to narrowly avoid putting him on life support and improve his breathing significantly.

The next day in the intensive care unit, he tearfully thanked his colleagues for saving his life. He articulated that when he could not breathe, nothing else mattered. He had not previously recognized the severity of his asthma. In fact, he said he probably denied that truth, even as an experienced health professional, and he wasn't sure or clear on what triggered his severe attacks. He said that more education needed to be done with the public about lung health to bring awareness to risk factors that contribute to lung health conditions.

Providing care in such emergency care situations, although difficult, was something that, as a critical care nurse, I was well trained to do. For me, the issues of lung health are also very personal. As a mother who raised a

child with severe lung disease who was often so short of breath that he could not walk up a flight of stairs or even remain at home for many months at a time, it was extremely difficult for our family to experience. Indeed, my husband, who wished to be here today, was so emotional about this time that he preferred to watch on TV. I understand the need for families caring for their loved ones with lung disease to have the best possible treatments—but more importantly, how best to prevent lung disease in the first place.

During the almost four years that Rory spent admitted to hospitals in the early 1990s, he was between the ages of 10 and 14. Some of the health care professionals who were involved in his care had a lack of knowledge regarding his condition and what caused it. They couldn't understand that his complex lung issues also included chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, even at such a young age. When he was about 13 years old, again in the early 1990s, during a prolonged nine-month stay at a hospital where he was under continuous observation, a doctor continuously asked him how much he smoked, because it was the only explanation she could think of to account for his severe emphysema. Clearly, there's more work to do to raise awareness about lung health, prevention and treatment in Ontario.

As a society, we have actually come a long way in awareness and behavioural issues regarding lung health. It's hard to believe this now, but when I started at SickKids, down University Avenue, as a new nurse over 30 years ago, there were smoking rooms for parents on each ward in the hospital. Staff could smoke in the cafeteria, doctors could smoke in their offices, and in adult hospitals patients could smoke in their beds.

Years ago, asthma care was inconsistent, medication regimes were less effective, and asthma attacks caused a great number of pediatric hospital admissions. Indeed, at peak times in the year at Sick Kids hospital, the ward census and number of asthma admissions were reported on daily. A focus on the prevention and treatment of asthma during studies to develop best-practice guidelines and a standard of care right across the province worked, in trying to have a consistent, effective approach to asthma treatment for all Ontarians.

In my experience, more can be done to make lung health a priority in Ontario, with evidence-based best practices that are communicated to and adopted by health care providers across Ontario. This approach means fewer hospital admissions and improved outcomes for those suffering from lung disease. I'm proud to be part of a government that continues to make changes to protect our lung health, and I look forward to the legislation that will be reintroduced regarding flavoured tobacco.

Previous legislation passed by this government restricts smoking from restaurants, workplaces, and cars with young children inside, and that further underlines our commitment to reducing smoking-related diseases.

The support of this government, which followed through on the commitment to close all coal-fired generation plants in Ontario by 2014, has also made a positive difference in the quality of air we all breathe.

I look forward this afternoon to the debate regarding this Bill in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, introduced by my colleague from Cambridge, who is a nurse. I am a nurse as well, and I know the member from Scarborough—Agincourt is also a nurse. Maybe nurses in the Legislature are making a difference in disease prevention and wellness.

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Let's have a round of applause for that. I think we should.

Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: This being Lung Month, it's very good to continue to try and promote education awareness and to have a strategy from the provincial government on lung disease prevention—a coordinated effort.

The member mentioned a lot of statistics. I think people listening would be quite stunned to hear of the number of people who suffer from lung disease. To say that it's going to increase by 50% in the next 30 years is kind of shocking to people.

We both could probably tell you some awful stories from the hospital. I don't think that anyone who hasn't experienced not being able to catch their breath to fill their lungs with air, even a little bit—the panic in those patients is terrifying for us to see as nurses, because it is immediate. As Maslow's hierarchy of needs says, it's air first. If you can't breathe, nothing else matters. It is very terrifying. So anything that we can do to help in the prevention of lung disease, we should be doing.

She mentioned a coordinated and integrated approach—no question. It is kind of surprising that lung disease is the only major disease that does not have a strategy, so I applaud her for taking her past background as a nurse and bringing this issue forward.

I know that smoking is a large part of lung disease. I have, in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, one of the higher percentages of people who smoke, at 23.2%, with the Ontario average, which I know the member mentioned, at 17.8%. So we can do a lot better on the education aspect of that and keep assessing the stop-smoking programs that are available, if they're working, to see what we can do better.

It always alarms me when I go past high schools and see the number of kids out smoking, especially the number of girls. It's not an official poll; it's just me seeing what's going on in the community, and I'm shocked. Obviously, we need to do something better, and I don't know what it is out there.

I can share the nursing story of working the night shift at Toronto General Hospital, just down the road. The nurses smoked on the night shift. Sometimes in the doctors' offices, once you went in, the ashtray was there, and the doctors were smoking too. So we have come a long way. We do have to do a much better job.

The nice thing about private members' bills is we can bring a lot of things forward that are positive for our

communities and for the people in the province of Ontario. I hope this is one of these things that gets passed and is actually acted on by the government. I'm pleased to support the bill brought forward by the member from Cambridge today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I think I'll start by saying that I'm not a nurse, but I know that nurses always make a difference.

Bill 41 is very important. Hopefully, as I do this talk, you'll see why.

Thank you for allowing me to speak on the issue of lung health in regard to this bill. I'd like to take a moment and talk about one aspect of lung health, and that's lung cancer. It is an issue that has affected my life and my very dear family.

1400

But first, let's start at the beginning: what lung cancer is. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide and one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in Canada. There are two types of lung cancer: small-cell lung cancer and non-small-cell lung cancer. Both of these grow differently and have different symptoms. If you find lung cancer early enough, there's a 40% to 50% five-year survival rate, but the problem is that lung cancer is hard to find and sometimes there are almost no symptoms. In advanced lung cancer cases, this drops to around 1% to 5%.

Some 26,100 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer this year. This represents 14% of all new cancer cases in 2014. On average, 72 Canadians are diagnosed with lung cancer every day. You can put that in perspective right in this chamber: That would mean that everybody in the PC party and the NDP could have lung cancer. Put that in perspective and take a look at what that means.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, about one in 12 Canadian men is expected to develop lung cancer during his lifetime, and one in 13 will die from it. About one in 14 Canadian women is expected to develop lung cancer during her lifetime, and one in 17 will die from it. When those people get sick, the province is here to support them, but the best way to fight lung cancer is through prevention. So how do we do this? How do we protect ourselves, our loved ones and those in our community from this terrible disease? The first and best way is either to quit or avoid smoking—and I'll talk to that later.

In the last few years, we've made great strides in preventing smoking, especially around young people. We have to get to our young people to make sure they don't start smoking, before they become addicted. Nothing is more heart-wrenching than seeing a young person affected by this disease. Working hard and working together, we've managed to scale back those odds, though there's still work to be done in educating those in the province of Ontario about the dangers of smoking.

Evidence shows that you're 10 times more likely to develop lung cancer if you smoke. Think of that for a

minute; think about the danger you could be putting yourself into. I'm glad to say that I don't smoke and never have, but not necessarily some of my family members.

We're also starting to discover other things that cause lung cancer. Over the summer, in one of the neighbourhoods in Niagara Falls, we were delighted to have Mike Holmes stop by, whom many of you probably recognize from his work on TV. I went with him to one of our subdivisions to discuss the issue of radon in homes. Mr. Holmes was able to tell me and local residents of the importance of monitoring this odourless, colourless and hard-to-detect gas. It seeps into your house through cracks in the foundation. Though there's still research to be done, we can tell that some homes with high amounts of radon may be affecting people's lung health.

Mr. Holmes is working his way across the country to promote radon awareness and testing for it. He was quick to tell me that some homes might return a test to say there isn't any, and the house right next to them will be off the charts. I'm not a home construction expert by any means, but if I take my advice from anybody on this issue, it would be from Mr. Holmes.

Another factor is staying active. We need to make sure our young people—and our seniors, for that matter—are living active and healthy lifestyles.

These are the sort of things we can do to keep our lungs healthy and keep them safe. If we stop smoking, if we're aware of the causes and we stay active, then we can dramatically reduce the effects of lung cancer.

I'm happy we're discussing this because I do believe that the government plays a role in this. I believe we have a responsibility to monitor the effects of lung disease and do everything we can to educate people and prevent it.

Unfortunately, I want to close by talking about my own experience. My mother passed away in 1991, 23 years ago, at the tender age of 61. Mom was active in our community. My dad was fortunate enough to work part of his working career at General Motors. From that, there was an organization within the union movement called the Women's Auxiliary. My mother would go there. They would play cards and darts, and that would be their social connection, and she had a lot of good friends. They really loved each other. My mom ended up being the president of that organization for 20 years, arranging a number of socials. When people went on strike, they'd make sandwiches. Years ago, we used to have a hall, and they used to make the roast beef dinners.

I can remember telling a story about this. When I was young, nine or 10 years old—and, like today, there were not enough volunteers. So they're doing a wedding one night and my mom took me to the hall. I was thrilled to go at that young age. I was eight or nine. My mom told me that if I would come, she'd feed me a nice roast beef dinner. For me, that was important. When I got there, I didn't know I had to wash dishes for three hours to get that roast beef dinner. But having said that, they were preparing the food for a member of the local.

But unfortunately, my mom got sick. Then we found out that she had lung cancer, and she got really sick, and

she lost a lung. The doctor at that time said to her very clearly, "If you want to continue a productive life, you're going to have to quit smoking." Our family members, my sister, my brother, our relatives, our circle of friends, would say to my mom, "Mom, you've got to quit smoking." So my mom tried a number of times, but she couldn't quit smoking. A lot of us have friends, maybe some in this room or some within your caucuses, who smoke and have tried to quit and they couldn't.

So what happened? The cancer came back. She had half her lung removed; she had half a lung left. My mom went down to—we're not very big. You can tell I'm not very big, and my mom was smaller than I am. She went down to 90 pounds, 85 pounds. And we begged her, "Mom, you've got to quit smoking. It's going to kill you." We went to the doctor with her and the doctor was clear: "Gloria, Gloria, for your family"—my dad had already passed away—"for your grandkids, you have to quit."

No matter how hard my mom tried, she couldn't quit. No matter how much she loved her family, she couldn't quit. At the end of the day, my mom passed away long before she should have.

So if there's any advice I can give with this bill, it's that we've got to tell our young people that when you have that first cigarette, that may be the start of a lifelong battle to stop smoking. Collectively, we have to do everything we can to make sure young people don't start smoking. For my mom, it's obviously too late. For people that are listening today, talk to your kids about it, because once you start, most people find it almost impossible to quit—including losing their life.

Thank you very much for giving me the privilege to talk to your bill.

1410

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I'm delighted to have a couple of minutes to add my voice to this wonderful Bill 41, brought in by the wonderful member from Cambridge. Thank you so much for bringing it to the floor of the House.

Also, I want to acknowledge members from the Lung Association, including a young man who was stolen from me by the Lung Association. They saw a good young man, and now he's working for them. It's great that Chris Yaccato has moved from my office to the Lung Association.

What is very refreshing as well, recognizing the importance of Bill 41 and the efforts, the actions, the foresight and the willingness of the member from Cambridge—the bill, I can see, is having the support of the entire House, and deservedly so. It's one of those bills that are hard not to support.

Briefly, what does the bill do? The unfortunate thing is that I only have a couple of minutes when I really have so much to say about it, as my first granddaughter and daughter-in-law also suffer from asthma. My granddaughter since has moved to BC. She's a bit better; perhaps the air is better in BC. But I know the effect of that.

Very clearly, Bill 41 is called the Lung Health Act, 2014. To some, this might not mean very much, so we have the long explanation which the member has provided. The long name actually is "An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease." How wonderful it is. In short, the bill calls for a health advisory council, which would create a provincial lung health plan. Why is that, Speaker? We heard the member say—and it's worth repeating—that lung disease is the only major chronic disease without a dedicated strategy. If there is one—with many others—it's the lung disease that should have a strategy. Speaker, you and I and everyone in our province, young or old, we want our lungs healthy for life. We want our lungs healthy for life.

What does the bill do? Through the council, it is to prevent lung disease, to improve patients' outcomes and to save health care dollars as well.

I want to give you a few statistics, and then I'll go to some of the other views about what the council could do.

Just to give you an idea, not only the health effects but lung cancer, in 2011, cost the province of Ontario some \$293.9 million. In 2021, it will jump to \$8 billion; by 2031, it's \$19.6 billion. If I go to 2041, it's \$33.5 billion. If we were to pass this through quickly and get it implemented, I can say without hesitation that this would go a long way in making a difference not only in the health of our people, especially our young people, but also financially for the health care system.

This has been said before: 2.4 million people in Ontario are living with asthma, COPD or lung cancer. I had to ask the member from Cambridge, "What's COPD?" People watching the TV would say, "What the heck is Mario talking about, COPD?" It's chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This number is expected to grow to 3.6 million in 30 years.

There have been significant increases in the prevalence of COPD and asthma in the past two years. Approximately 850,000 Ontarians are living with COPD, and 1.9 million Ontarians with asthma—one in five children. Beyond chronic lung disease, influenza and respiratory infections cause 2% of all deaths in Ontario.

Also, according to the World Health Organization, lung disease is the third-leading cause of non-communicable-disease deaths in the world. Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer, killing eight out of 10 people who have it.

I think my time is up, Speaker. As I said, it's unfortunate that I can't say much more, because it requires much more, but I want to give some time to other members.

Again, I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge for bringing this wonderful Bill 41 to the floor of the House and, I hope, speedy passage.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It is indeed a good day in the House, as we debate and thrust our support behind Bill 41. I thank the member from Cambridge for bringing it forward. I also thank the members of the Ontario Lung Association for being here today. I salute you.

I think it's so moving, hearing everyone's personal stories as to why an action plan and focus on one of the most important things we can do—support easy breathing, and stand united, stand as Breathers United, to make a difference for people who have been so challenged.

We've heard about COPD. We've heard about asthma, cystic fibrosis, IPF. It just makes me think of so many people—and I stand on their shoulders. That's how I want to say that.

I think of a good friend of mine. We've been together for decades. She has dealt with asthma. From time to time, things will trigger her asthma, and she has to rush to the local hospital for Ventolin treatments. I know that scared look that the member for Cambridge referred to. But the other side of the coin is that I also stayed behind to care for their kids as she and her husband went to hospital. It affects everyone. When the kids don't understand what is happening to their mom when she can't breathe, that's something you don't forget either.

Then we talk about cystic fibrosis. Again, we stand on the shoulders of people who worked so hard to try and make a difference. I think of our local Kinsmen Clubs. The Teeswater Kinsmen and the Lucknow Kinsmen work so hard to raise money for cystic fibrosis, and I salute them too—in fact, all Kinsmen Clubs across the province.

In terms of IPF, I was thrilled this past summer to see action on this finally, once and for all. I've been reading in petitions for months upon months, in terms of getting some action on consideration of the drug known as Esbriet for people suffering from IPF. I think about Barb, one of the champions who have been to Queen's Park time and time again. She's just a wonderful soul. We stand on her shoulders today as we look forward and put our support behind something that has been long needed in Ontario.

In terms of IPF, I think about those petitions I read in, and I couldn't help but recognize so many names that stood behind specifically a family and a gentleman from Mildmay, Hugh Detzler. He was a poster child for the need for Esbriet in this province. I was very, very quick to respond in late August on Twitter—and it went around like wildfire—that considerations for qualified sufferers of IPF would now be given in Ontario for the drug Esbriet. That, too, was a good day.

We have to recognize that yesterday was World COPD Day. Yes, I did my bit. I'm looking at the member from Burlington as well—I hope your results were as good as mine—and the member from Kingston and the Islands. It was a very good exercise.

I learned something, though, in going to Women's College Hospital yesterday morning. Women at the age of 40 need to think about being tested earlier, because it may not be diagnosed as easily, and it hits them a little bit earlier as well. As you get older, those symptoms may be confused with other things—the way it was shared with me yesterday.

1420

I think what I realized yesterday is that my dad was right: You need to be proactive about your health. Taking

this test didn't last more than five minutes. The people who facilitate the test care so much. They make you at ease, and make it easy for you to be proactive. That's a message that's really important here as well, as we think about the type of action plan and framework that goes around the support that this bill requires.

I'd be remiss, as you all may know, not to touch a little bit more on COPD. As I mentioned earlier, the one thing I learned from my dad is that you have to be proactive about your health. A couple of years ago, the last photo I had with Dad—darn it, I thought I was going to make it through—was a Breathers United t-shirt. We were holding it up, and we were saluting everyone who was working so hard to make sure that people understand what it's like to have difficulty breathing. COPD is a nasty, nasty disease, but Dad surpassed his life expectancy by seven years because he chose to be proactive. He learned to live with COPD for 12 years, and that's, again, because he was proactive. He sought out support groups that were proactive.

His legacy is extended today through the actions that we're taking in supporting Bill 41. Again, I just want to go over the importance of this: This act will allow individuals and groups from across the province to voice their important stories and insights in living with lung disease.

Without further ado, I'd like to share the rest of the time with my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings, because he knows first-hand how important this is.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I don't have a lot of time, but I just want to bring a different issue to this debate, and that is industrial diseases. I got involved in provincial politics as a result of work that I did with the United Steelworkers and Local 4440 out of Timmins in order to identify, first of all, that people who worked underground at the time had been diseased as a result of what they were breathing underground, and had contracted lung cancer, which led to death for a great number of people. It's an awful disease that is caused by many things.

One of the things that we also need to keep in mind is that the workplaces across this province are an area where we need to do as much work as we can—to make sure that the workplace is safe, so that people don't have to go through the kinds of experiences that we saw in the dusty old gold mines of the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s that led to many a miner dying of lung cancer and leaving their widows and children behind, alone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I add my voice to those of the members for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and Niagara Falls, the minister responsible for seniors and the member from Huron-Bruce, who spoke so eloquently and so personally. I want to extend her comments—because she's right; this is an issue that touches so many of us personally. I'm going to try to get through my speech

as eloquently as the member from Huron–Bruce did, without shedding a tear—because this is the kind of conversation that can generate those responses.

I want to start by expressing my support for the Lung Health Act and congratulating my colleague the member from Cambridge.

Just yesterday, I spoke, as many have done today, in recognition of World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day.

COPD is an issue that's prevalent in my own riding. I didn't know this until recently, but over 5,000 hospital emergency department visits related to COPD each year take place through the LHIN, which is really quite incredible when you think about it.

Preventive measures are of the utmost importance, and this piece of legislation will give more resources to health care workers in their fight against lung diseases. It will also give important focus and attention to some of society's most pernicious and prevalent conditions: asthma; lung cancer; emphysema; as the member opposite mentioned, IPF; and COPD, just to name a few.

The good news is that smoking is on the decline. In my own riding, the smoking rate is 17.4%, just below the provincial rate of 17.8%, but that number is still too high, and I believe that we can do more to lower this number. The Lung Health Act is another tool that we can use in this battle.

Just three to nine months after quitting smoking, lung function can increase by as much as 30%, and symptoms, such as shortness of breath and coughing, can disappear. After 10 years, the risk of lung cancer is reduced by 50%. So educating the public on all of the risk factors that contribute to lung health decline, including smoking, can go a long way in ensuring that Ontarians have healthy lungs today and in the future.

COPD is just one of the significant lung diseases, as we mentioned earlier, facing our society. Lung cancer, IPF, emphysema and asthma, among others, are serious problems in our community. They can devastate families, as has already been noted, and can cost our society billions of dollars.

On a personal note, I lost my father to lung cancer as well. Twenty years ago, Dad passed away, far too young, at the age of 72. We watched him die, and it was devastating. We could have prevented that, and I'm hoping that through initiatives like this legislation we can do that so that other families won't have to lose loved ones far too young.

At the age of four, I developed asthma and have coped with it my entire life. I became seriously ill with pneumonia and I was in and out of hospitals as a young person. It has gotten better with age, but I still cope with asthma. So I understand too what pulmonary function is all about and how, as a woman, it can be extremely devastating.

To tackle the diverse obstacles to achieving optimal lung health for all Ontarians, we must co-operate and share best practices. The Lung Health Advisory Council proposed in the legislation would do that.

Mr. Speaker, Boehringer Ingelheim, a research-based pharmaceutical company located in my riding of Burlington, is a shining example of the types of partnerships that can lead to improvements in the lives of Ontarians. Boehringer Ingelheim recently partnered with the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement in an effort to bring better care and outcomes to COPD patients through a program they call INSPIRED, Implementing a Novel and Supportive Program of Individualized care for patients and families living with Respiratory Disease.

Of the 19 sites in Canada, seven INSPIRED sites are in Ontario, and I'm happy to say that there's one at Joseph Brant Hospital in my riding, and it's working very well. A collaboration such as this is critical to the future sustainability of not only our health care system but all of Canada. Creating the Lung Health Advisory Council would only enhance the ability of organizations and programs like these to ensure that Ontarians get the most information about how to keep their lungs healthy and get easy and efficient access to health care programs when they need them most.

Monsieur le Président, ensemble nous pouvons créer un environnement plus sain pour les poumons de l'Ontario. Le Conseil consultatif de la maladie pulmonaire est un outil qui promouvrait la recherche, la sensibilisation et le traitement dans nos communautés. Avec la collaboration de l'Association pulmonaire, du ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée et de plusieurs autres, nous pouvons améliorer la santé de notre province.

In closing, ultimately it's our responsibility as legislators to keep Ontarians as safe and healthy as possible now and in the future, and this bill will do just that. I would like to salute my colleague the member for Cambridge for her important work in this regard and for her efforts to make Ontario a healthier place with the Lung Health Act, 2014.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: Thanks to all of you who have talked about the importance of lung health here this afternoon and told your personal stories. Congratulations as well to the member from Cambridge on putting forward your first private member's bill, which looks like it's going to be a successful one, so congratulations.

I only have a couple of minutes to add a quick personal story myself. I, like many of my colleagues, have read different petitions into the register here and talked about lung health and gone to the various events that the lung association has held here at Queen's Park. I was very pleased when Chris was in my riding earlier this year during the election campaign to sign the lung health action plan, and I felt great at that time. I was out running the roads in my shorts and sneakers and knocking on doors, and I felt fantastic.

How quickly that can change. I don't know if you noticed, but for the first couple of weeks that the Legislature was sitting after Thanksgiving, I wasn't here. The big reason for that was, leading into the Thanksgiving

holiday, a pulmonary embolism made its way from behind my knee into my lung and was pressing up against my heart. There have been a lot of tears here today as people have told their personal stories, but I can tell you, as the father of two young girls who are 13 and 11, there were a few tears shed when that happened as well. It's a very life-threatening thing. It certainly puts a lot of things into perspective when something like that happens.

1430

I'm so glad that I'm able to be here today. My daughters don't have to cry and tell the story about their dad. But, obviously, it has put a new perspective on how important our lungs are—I'll throw the heart in there, too. It's pretty important to operating on a daily basis.

Breathers United has a new meaning for me. "When you can't breathe, nothing else matters," has a brand new meaning for me. That's for sure. Fortunately, we have some great health professionals. We have great nurses. We have great doctors who were quick to find the problem.

I think it's fantastic that you, as a new member, Mrs. McGarry, have brought this bill forward here to the Legislature today. I look forward to its passage later on this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I too want to lend caucus support to the member from Cambridge for this very, very important bill. I am a member of the lung caucus, and I am a member for a number of reasons that are personal to my life.

Hearing these stories is so touching. This is such a prevalent problem in our society. I'll share quickly: My stepdaughter affectionately refers to me as her fake dad; I woke up about two weeks ago, and she could hardly breathe. She was throwing up. There was nothing in her lungs; she couldn't get it. She suffers from asthma—the dust and issues in the house. All of a sudden, it was very, very serious at 4 o'clock in the morning. You wonder what is going to happen next. So we comforted her, relaxed her and were able to get her breathing back.

We are looking for solutions, longer term, and I appreciate it. I hope this bill will go a long way to finding those solutions. Congratulations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now go back to the member for Cambridge. You have two minutes for a response.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you so much Speaker. Through you, I want to thank all of the members who spoke to this bill today: the members from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Niagara Falls, York West, Huron-Bruce, Timmins-James Bay, Burlington, Prince Edward-Hastings and Beaches-East York. I so appreciate your personal stories, the personal touches. I think it is evident in the House today that lung health affects each and every one of us.

Today, I come full circle to the reasons I first ran to be a member of this assembly. My experience as a nurse and

parent who raised a child with severe lung issues emphasized the need for a more developed health action plan to prevent and effectively treat lung health issues in Ontario. It motivated me to bring this bill forward, and I do hear support throughout the House. I thank all the members in the House for their support a little later.

This bill, as we know, addresses the need for the Lung Health Advisory Council, to make the recommendations regarding lung health issues, and it would focus on research, prevention and treatment of lung disease. The economic burden of caring for so many Ontarians who have lung health issues is significant, and a more comprehensive approach would go a long way to reducing the number of admissions and preventing lung disease—as well as the costs, not only to our own families and our community members but also to our health care system.

We have tremendous support from our lung health organizations, such as the Ontario Lung Association, who do so much with public awareness and education campaigns. I thank them for the work that they do each and every day on our behalf.

I thank all the members in the House for their support today, and I too look forward to the passage of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote on that item at the end of private members' public business.

PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN CONCERNING VECTOR-BORNE AND ZOONOTIC DISEASES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE CADRE ET LE PLAN D'ACTION PROVINCIAUX CONCERNANT LES MALADIES ZOONOTIQUES ET À TRANSMISSION VECTORIELLE

Mr. Barrett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases / Projet de loi 27, Loi exigeant un cadre et un plan d'action provinciaux concernant les maladies zoonotiques et à transmission vectorielle.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker.

As I'll explain, over the past several months I have been working on legislation designed to hopefully better enable the province of Ontario to deal with emerging infectious diseases, diseases such as West Nile, Lyme, Ebola, diseases that seem to be catching us, as a society, kind of flat-footed or somewhat unprepared when they emerge.

When new or relatively unknown diseases advance, public health disease treatment systems often are unprepared. Again, public health will scramble to respond, as

do treatment systems, but in many cases with less than satisfactory success. We must have programs in place designed to not only accommodate some of the diseases I mentioned but any new threats. There probably will be something on the horizon, perhaps Marburg virus. We don't know.

Now, there presently is no legislation directing the Ministry of Health to call together any kind of comprehensive plan or program, so this proposed law would essentially set in place a decision-making tree or structure and set in place policies so that we can hit the ground running.

I've often felt that our province's health care system really doesn't adequately reflect the need for prevention to the extent that it should vis-à-vis treatment. In my view, it's a system designed to treat illness, not so much to prevent it. It's basically oriented towards physicians, towards hospitals that are in the business of treatment, by and large. I'm not a physician; I worked in the health care field for 20 years. I'm not a research scientist, but I did work for a provincial research agency for 20 years.

Many physicians in Ontario, unlike our present Minister of Health, are not trained in tropical medicine, or aren't necessarily trained in public health, for that matter. This hit home to me many years ago. I returned from a six-month stint in South America. I was working in shipyards. I owned a boat down there. I was up to my neck in the Paramaribo River and the Amazon, and I brought home a number of tropical skin diseases. Fortunately, my physician in Port Dover, Dr. Thompson, was from Jamaica and had training in tropical diseases, and he explained to me that there wouldn't be another doctor in the area who would know what to do with what I brought back from South America.

Given my previous background, I am bound—I feel bound—to take a neutral, objective, evidence-based, science-based, research-based approach to crafting this legislation. I'm calling for a provincial framework. I'm calling for an action plan through our Ministry of Health, a plan that, first and foremost, encompasses surveillance, education materials and guidelines—guidelines for prevention, identification, diagnosis, treatment and management, including emergency preparedness—and calls for the sharing of best practices provincially and across our country. It would instruct the Minister of Health to bring in legislation to bolster research collaboration among all concerned, particularly those in the public.

I would ask for referral to a standing committee for hearings, and I also know there is a call for a select committee. There are different ways we could go, of course. It indicates that a website should be set up within a year.

So again, one of my goals really is to facilitate an efficient, more effective allocation, essentially, of what I consider scarce health resources. Going back to prevention, it's much more cost-effective to prevent than to treat. We know that the worldwide cost of SARS, for example, was \$40 billion, and the bill in Canada came in at \$2 billion, so prevention is key. Prevention is certainly

key when there is no vaccine or no effective treatment. Obviously, when you're dealing with a particular affliction like that, prevention is the only option.

1440

As far as definitions in general in the legislation—when we talk about vector-borne or zoonotic diseases or infectious diseases, their transmission involves an animal host. In some cases, it involves a vector. It may be a mosquito, with respect to West Nile; it may be a tick, with respect to Lyme.

Over the past two millennia, there certainly have been periods in history where disease outbreaks have wreaked havoc in human populations. Advances in medicine have tamed much of this, but complete eradication is still at bay for so many diseases.

Those dealing death, like the present concern with Ebola, get most of the attention, but other newly arrived diseases like West Nile—there was quite a ruckus about West Nile, certainly in my area down on Long Point on Lake Erie, seven years ago—or Lyme disease are devastating for those who may have picked them up.

Changing environments: Diseases are changing, and those in charge need to change and accommodate, as do the rest of us. My concern is that these newly arrived diseases, the unknowns, compete for attention. They compete for scarce resources. To partly accommodate that, I call for a framework to set priorities with respect to allocation of resources.

I mentioned surveillance. Going back to surveillance, we need a program that must be designed to properly track incidence rates and to track associated economic costs. Timely and accurate information is crucial to detect, to monitor. As I said, it's more effective to prevent rather than to treat. We know that from SARS. Part of that was blamed, as I understand it, on lax prevention and hygiene.

A few decades ago, so many of these diseases I've mentioned were not a concern in Ontario. That has changed. There has been what I consider a clear and immediate threat. Again, the importance of education: We just can't get all our information from CNN or from websites.

In my area—and I do try and put out the word—if you're involved in farming, fishing, hunting or biking, or spending a lot of time outdoors or working outdoors—I think of our MNR staff, for example—you have to keep an eye out for the symptoms.

This summer I met with three people in my constituency office. They all reported that they felt they had Lyme. They felt, like others in their situation, that the health care system wasn't there for them. In this case, they reported they were paying out of their own pocket. They received a diagnosis in the United States, and I just think that's unfortunate.

The stories are different. These three are in the prime of their lives. They saw a debilitating change when they caught the diseases and were diagnosed. They were concerned. They felt that some of the MRIs were unnecessary, and the other procedures. They advocated the long-

term antibiotic treatment. I feel the jury is out on that one.

I'm not taking sides on any of those issues, by the way. That's up to government. We have government for a reason. That's up to the framework, the action plan, the process that I'm proposing to make those kinds of decisions and to continue to make those kinds of decisions.

Lyme disease: It's the blacklegged tick. I don't have time to get into a lot of detail. It's a hot spot down in my area: the north shore of Lake Erie, the north shore of Lake Ontario, and along the St. Lawrence. Both Long Point and Turkey Point were very early hot spots. The signs are up there, but I don't see people—we have hundreds of thousands of people come to our provincial parks in the summer and I don't see them with long pants and socks, rolled into boots, to protect themselves from ticks.

West Nile is mosquito-borne, as we know. Mosquitoes like long grass and standing water. Most people infected develop no symptoms; about 20% will develop what is known as West Nile fever. I don't have time to go into the symptoms, but again, as with other zoonotics, in this case an animal host was first detected in Africa in the 1930s, and was detected in Ontario in birds. At the time, I spent one weekend driving around with a dead crow in my trunk, waiting for Monday morning to take it into the health unit to be tested.

I've mentioned West Nile and Lyme. Other vector-borne would include equine encephalitis virus, malaria, yellow fever—travel-related, not endemic transmission within our province of Ontario.

We hear so much about Lyme. Including probable cases, our public health system identified 185 cases in Ontario. There are more cases of malaria in Ontario, actually—220. West Nile comes in at 239.

I feel there's much work to be done; hence my proposal with respect to a comprehensive framework and an action plan to address new and emerging diseases.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for tabling Bill 27, the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act. And thank you for the opportunity, Speaker, to speak to this today.

Over the past few months, our newspapers and news reports have been filled with concerns over the spread of diseases, most notably, of course, the spread of Ebola. Ebola is only one of a number of diseases that meet the classification of vector-borne or zoonotic disease, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, West Nile virus, Lyme disease and others.

It has come to my attention that there is a new one that has developed in the Caribbean. It's on the health warning system for Canada for travellers. I believe I'm saying it right: chikungunya. It's a new mosquito-borne disease—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Chikungunya.

Mr. Paul Miller: Chikungunya—that is similar to malaria, the symptoms, but unfortunately they have no

vaccine for this. Apparently, this type of mosquito is very aggressive. It bites during the day as well, not just at dawn or in the morning. They're very concerned in the Caribbean because of vacationers. It's a major tourism spot. They are working on it. It's my understanding that within a year or two, they hope to have a vaccine to combat it.

I'm headed that way on Sunday. You would think I was going into the deepest part of Africa. My wife has got nets for the bed for us and bathing suits with nets—it's unbelievable.

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: Yes. I'll be the only guy on the beach with a hat with a net on it, but anyway. Certainly precautions are important.

These are all examples of diseases that we've heard a great deal about because of extensive news coverage but fortunately have not been extensively exposed to here in Canada. This is in part because of the quality of our health care system and the protective measures that we put in place as we go.

As you know, Speaker, there are always gaps to be filled. There is not one MPP in this Legislature here today or any of the 107 elected members across this province whose constituency offices have not received numerous concerns on these very topics. I can attest that through my office I have encountered more than a handful of constituents who have found themselves stonewalled and left to fend for themselves when dealing with Lyme disease alone. Lyme disease has been considered reportable in Ontario since 1991, but unfortunately our response continues to be insufficient and unacceptable.

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Too often, we hear stories of residents of this province—a province with a universal health care system—forced to cross the border into Buffalo or Detroit and pay for medical services that are not being provided for them here. I understand that Lyme disease is a topic that even medical professionals continue to debate, in terms of what the best forms of treatment and responses are. The fact that our constituents are forced to travel outside the country for care is proof that we can do better.

If you would indulge me for a few minutes, Speaker, I would like to discuss a couple of stories specific to my riding of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. As I've said, it is a concern that we have heard many times, and I believe it will help to illustrate the need for greater response in our province.

A lady by the name of Anita Kos is a constituent of mine. Anita struggled with Lyme disease for almost a decade before she finally was diagnosed in the United States in 2013. I'll read a quote from Anita: "If it had been caught early here, it wouldn't have got to the stage it's at now, where it robs me of any quality of life and independence. It wreaks havoc on every system of my body and it's very unpredictable, so I don't know hour to hour how I'm going to feel. It's a horrible way to live."

According to the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation, there are three stages of this disease: early infection;

spreading of the infection; and chronic Lyme. As time is allowed to pass, both the diagnosis and the treatment become increasingly more difficult. Symptoms worsen, and there's not a single system in the human body that this disease does not affect.

In the early 1990s, there was only one known endemic area in Ontario: at Long Point Provincial Park. Since then, Ontario has seen an increase in the distribution of ticks, especially in eastern Ontario. And this is the important part: Public Health Ontario acknowledges that this has resulted in "an increase in locally acquired human cases of Lyme disease." Public Health Ontario has also stated that "the incidence rate of Lyme in Ontario has been steadily increasing since 2002." Yet we continue to stand back and allow this to occur.

Anita doesn't know where she contracted Lyme disease, but, sadly, she's glad to know now that she has it as it has allowed her to begin treatment and the path to recovery. But the treatment isn't cheap—far from it. For Anita to visit the Sponaugle Wellness Institute in Florida, it costs nearly \$4,000 a week.

Speaker, every time I hear stories of the exorbitant, outrageous costs of health care south of the border, I have a renewed appreciation for our system of universal health care as provided to us by the great New Democrat and our greatest Canadian, Tommy Douglas. I can assure you that fellow citizens being forced across the border to pay for health care is not the system that Mr. Douglas had in mind when he created it.

I attended a fundraiser last year that members of our community held for Anita and her family to help them cover the cost of her ongoing care. While I was humbled and amazed by the generosity of the organizers and attendees, the fact that an individual Ontarian could be forced to fundraise for medical costs was the true takeaway from this event. The fact is, we need to do more.

Anita is not the only constituent of mine who is suffering from this disease. The Thiessen family, friends of mine who were stationed in Russia, doing work over there—consisting of parents Douglas and Julie, and their sons, Josh and Zac—are a wonderful family I have gotten to know in Stoney Creek through the incredible artwork that Josh does. He is now a renowned artist who is gaining fame in Canada. He studied under Bateman. He's a naturalist, with his paintings. This young gentleman is in his 20s, and some of his paintings are already selling for over \$20,000. They're a wonderful family, but I was shocked to learn last year that all four members of their family have been diagnosed and are suffering from Lyme disease. Though the family remain in good spirits and continue to have a significant positive impact on our community every day, they are still experiencing a lot of the same hardships that Anita faces, especially the father.

Speaker, the list goes on and on.

The bill we are debating today is not going to be an instant solution for the problem, but it is a good step in the right direction. I pray that our researchers and our physicians can come up with a solution. This is a complex medical issue, and though I don't have a medical

doctorate like our Minister of Health or the fine doctor across from me, I do have the common sense to see that we need to make changes and address this growing concern.

The bill will require the Minister of Health to develop a provincial framework and action plan that establishes a provincial surveillance program, standardized educational materials and guidelines regarding the prevention, identification, treatment and management of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

There are a lot of significant asks here, and they are something that I expect all members of this House should and will be able to support.

I've spent the majority of my time discussing Lyme disease, as it is an issue which I have encountered most frequently from my constituents visiting my office, but the same principles apply for all vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. The fact is, we need to take the necessary steps to address this issue head-on and support all Ontarians, our physicians and our researchers, and all the people who are suffering from or at risk of contracting one of these diseases. It's what our father of universal health care would have wanted.

I'm proud to stand before you today in support of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I rise today to speak to Bill 27, the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act. I will be supporting this bill this afternoon.

It's also important for the members to know about our government's ongoing commitment to protecting the people of Ontario from zoonotic and vector-borne diseases. Ontario has a robust strategy in place for the surveillance, prevention and control of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, including the promotion of public awareness of these diseases and emergency preparedness. An effective framework for the surveillance, prevention and control of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases already exists under two different pieces of public health legislation: on the one hand, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, and the other being the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, including the Ontario Public Health Standards.

The HPPA sets out the legal reporting requirements for a list of infectious diseases, including zoonotic, which are diseases that involve transmission from an animal to a human, and also vector-borne, which are those that require an intermediary, if you will, often a mosquito, for the transmission from one human to another human. Of course, many of these diseases are of concern in Ontario. Among them, of course, we know SARS, West Nile virus, Lyme disease and Ebola virus disease.

Public Health Ontario collects and analyzes this data that we receive in order to track incidence rates and to identify any trends requiring public health action in order to mitigate any outbreaks or prevent the spread of the disease. The Infectious Diseases Protocol that this gov-

ernment has under the Ontario Public Health Standards sets out the specific guidelines for the prevention and the identification and management of reportable diseases.

At the provincial level, educational materials on zoonotic and vector-borne diseases for members of the public and health care providers are created and distributed by my ministry, and of course shared with the local public health units. The Public Health Agency of Canada also shares consistent public messaging and resources for vector-borne diseases such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease.

Speaker, members may be interested to know that Ontario is currently one of only two provinces and territories to have a public health veterinarian within its Ministry of Health with sole responsibility for the zoonotic and vector-borne disease portfolios. Ontario's track record with respect to zoonotic and vector-borne diseases demonstrates just how effective our existing framework for prevention and control is, including, for example, the successful management and prevention of rabies since the 1990s and West Nile virus since 2002.

It's also important to note that while Ebola virus disease continues to be an ongoing concern in West Africa, there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada or in Ontario, and the risk to Canadians remains very, very low. Nevertheless, we have taken precautions to ensure the safety of all Ontarians, especially our health care workers, our first line of defence against Ebola. Specifically, my ministry has worked together with Ontario health care providers and partners to provide them with guidelines regarding Ebola virus disease diagnosis, specimen collection, infection prevention and control, occupational health and safety measures, and laboratory testing.

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Since then, at my request, the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Mowat, has issued directives to all acute-care settings and paramedic and first responder services on the procedures necessary to protect the health of workers and significantly reduce the risk of spreading the disease. In fact, further directives from the interim chief are currently being prepared in consultation with key partners.

The acute-care directive requires that at all times two registered nurses provide care to each patient confirmed to have Ebola, and they must not care for any other patients. Further, we're enhancing the province's Ebola readiness strategies in six key ways.

First, my ministry has designated 11 referral hospitals across Ontario to serve as referral centres for the treatment of any confirmed Ebola cases.

Second, my ministry is working with emergency medical services to designate and equip ambulances to transport Ebola patients to designated hospitals for treatment. The first responders on these ambulances would wear impermeable, full-body barrier protection in order to protect themselves.

Third, the Ontario public health laboratory now has the capability to test any potential Ebola case in this province. This provides Ontario with local capacity that

makes test results available sooner; actually, within about four hours of receiving the sample.

Fourth, my ministry has created a formal health workers minister's advisory table on Ebola preparedness to ensure that the needs of health care workers are identified and addressed as quickly as possible. It brings together key stakeholders and partners to provide input and advice to inform the ministry's decisions as we continue to ensure Ontario's readiness. The first meetings, of course, have already taken place.

Fifth, my ministry created an Ebola Command Table, which I chair, and which includes the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Deputy Minister of Health, Public Health Ontario, our partner ministries, representatives from the province's local health integration networks and designated referral hospitals.

Finally, the province is enhancing the availability of personal protective equipment to protect health care workers who treat Ebola patients. My ministry is maintaining a website with information on the risk posed by Ebola virus disease for members of the public and health care providers.

In closing, I want to assure all Ontarians that their safety remains my top priority, a priority strongly supported by our province's framework for prevention and control of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases in Ontario. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for putting forward his bill. It's a good conversation to be having in the Legislature right now. As the Minister of Health just indicated, we're dealing with Ebola, mostly in West Africa; of course, there was the one case in the United States, down in Dallas, Texas, that proved to be a fatal case, and I believe one other case in Europe. But for the most part, it has been contained to Sierra Leone and West Africa.

However, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be vigilant. I have sort of a good-news story and a bad-news story I would like to share from my riding when it comes to—one is a zoonotic incident and one is a vector-borne incident.

I guess I'll share the good-news story first since we were just talking about Ebola and the health minister spoke about some of the protocols that are in place when dealing with a possible Ebola case. As many of you know, being in Prince Edward–Hastings, I represent the city of Belleville. Over the Thanksgiving weekend, it was early on the Thanksgiving Monday morning when a suspected case of Ebola walked into the emergency room at Belleville General Hospital. It was a member from our military who had been delivering health supplies to Sierra Leone. When he arrived back at home at CFB Trenton, he felt very, very ill and immediately came into the Belleville General Hospital. Full credit to the staff that were on early in the morning on Thanksgiving Monday. They had that patient isolated in an observation

room within four minutes of his arrival. They did excellent work, and I have to give proper credit to the registered nurse, Chris Wilson, who was on duty. He immediately put on his protective clothing so that he could protect himself and care for the individual. The calls went out, as you would expect that they would go out when this type of a case, or a suspected case, makes its way into your hospital. We're very fortunate to have a great chief of staff at Quinte Health Care, Dr. Dick Zoutman, who actually is an infectious disease expert in his own right, so he knew exactly what to do. The physicians and the staff handled that situation extremely well.

Fortunately, after several hours of waiting for the test results—and one of the things that the minister hit on is that we need to get those results quickly, because in this day and age, the way the Twitverse goes, that poor guy, who came into the hospital to get checked out as a possible case of Ebola, had Ebola, as it was reported on Twitter. Everybody was in a frenzy, not just in the Belleville area but across Ontario and in Canada. We even had international attention because this individual made his way in.

The entire staff responded very quickly. If I could, I'd just like to give credit to Dr. Michael de la Roche, who is the chief of infection control. As you can imagine—it was Thanksgiving weekend—he was at a cottage an hour away, and immediately came in at 4:30 in the morning. All of the staff at the hospital were on heightened alert.

Things did seem to go according to plan there. They are making some changes to the way that they deal with things, as the minister has done in his capacity as the Minister of Health here in Ontario. We can always learn from these types of situations.

Now the bad: I just want to share a quick story about a problem in Prince Edward-Hastings and in other parts of Ontario as well, and that's Lyme disease and the fact that there don't seem to be proper protocols in place. I hope it is something that can be dealt with if the member from Haldimand-Norfolk gets his select committee or does manage to get this bill to committee. We need to have protocols that are in place across the province, where those who are working in our emergency rooms, and our family physicians and general practitioners, have the right information to pass along to people. I can tell you that it's really a patchwork kind of approach to dealing with Lyme disease, depending on where you go.

We've had a real outbreak of ticks in the central Hastings region, where I'm from. As a matter of fact, we just came through deer hunting season. There was a young kid from Tweed who was out hunting. He had seven ticks on him when he arrived back. It's a serious problem. You have to make sure that they know how to remove the ticks, first of all, and what the symptoms are, to know about Lyme disease and whether or not you could be negatively affected by Lyme disease.

I can tell you the story of one couple from the Centre Hastings area, and this is not unfamiliar; I believe the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek alluded to it

as well. Members of the public can't get the treatment, in our hospitals and from our physicians in Ontario, that they need to deal with this disease. There's one woman in my riding who has to drive to Plattsburgh, New York—it's about a four- or five-hour drive from her home—every six months to see a physician there to get the medication that she needs. Every time she goes there, it's \$700 or \$800, and that doesn't even include her medication, which can cost \$500 to \$600 more. She has dealt with this disease since 2006 but can't get anyone in this country or in this province to look after her symptoms and her prognosis, which is Lyme disease.

I know others are going to want to touch on this. I don't want to take too much of their time. But we really have to start to get this right. I think what the member from Haldimand-Norfolk is proposing in his private member's bill is a great way to start to get us headed in the right direction when we're dealing with these zoonotic and also vector-borne illnesses.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just want to take a few moments and discuss the bill around Lyme disease. I'm certainly pleased that the Minister of Health is here to hear this story.

Just a few weeks ago, I went to a fundraiser in Fort Erie for Amanda Wilson. Frankly, I was shocked at what they were raising funds for. Amanda is a young lady who is a border security officer. The Legion hall was packed; there were 600 or 700 people there. They were raising funds. Her co-workers were there; the other border security officers that weren't protecting our borders were there; her family was there. I had the privilege to talk to her father, who obviously is very, very concerned.

She's a young woman who is talented, smart and hard-working. She had contracted the disease. She was working on the front line at the border, like a lot of folks from Fort Erie, but now she has been out of work for over a year, all because Amanda was bitten by a tick.

The problem is—this is why I'm so glad that the health minister is listening to this—none of the testing here in Ontario came through that she had Lyme disease. For people like this, they get really sick and they stay sick for a long period of time. Amanda was going through an unbelievably tough time, with her family by her side. People with untreated Lyme disease kept getting worse. As my colleagues in the other party mentioned, the symptoms of Lyme disease look like symptoms of a number of other very bad diseases—MS, Alzheimer's.

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She went to the United States, and finally she was given a proper diagnosis that said what it was. It was Lyme disease. We have to ask ourselves why. Today, she is receiving treatment in Buffalo, New York, right across the river from her own home. The fundraiser I went to was to raise funds to pay for her medical bills, which are now currently over \$100,000. You see, Amanda cannot get proper treatment here in Ontario because we weren't able to do the testing that said she had Lyme disease. It

doesn't make a lot of sense to a lot of people probably in this room, but that's what happened.

She has been incredibly strong during this entire ordeal, and so have her family, her friends and her co-workers. But there are others like her. We shouldn't have to have fundraisers to help people who are sick receive medical care in the province of Ontario.

I appreciate the debate on this issue. I want to encourage this House to help the people of Ontario receive the medical care they have a right to.

I'll finish up by saying this to the Minister of Health: If you'd like to get more details on this or set up a meeting with the young lady, I would like to do that, but I think the bigger issue is, we've got to find out what the issue was here, to make sure it never happens to anybody else again. Thank you very much for standing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm just going to take two minutes because I want to address an issue that came up today.

The biggest factor in the increase in Lyme disease will be climate change—the biggest single factor. Recent studies done in Ontario show that warmer temperatures increase tick reproduction two to five times. I can tell you that since we're heading to four degrees Celsius, which is a higher base, that is twice the rate of warming that is now understood.

I have suggested a few times that we should raise this above the level of politics. To my friends in the Conservative Party I would say this: How are you going to pay for this, my dear friend who introduced the bill? If we have a fivefold increase in ticks in the next decade or so, we're likely going to have a fivefold increase in disease. Do you know how devastating that will be? I'm waiting to hear what the position of the Conservative Party is, if it's so concerned about Lyme disease. When we know that climate change will increase this by 500%, how do you deal with the devastation on families that you clearly and rightly see is a problem without addressing climate change?

We're going to get into politics—as long as you have free carbon dioxide and you don't have a trading mechanism like all of Europe does. It doesn't have to be a carbon tax, but there has to be some sort of trading mechanism. How do you fight this when carbon dioxide is emitted for free and there's no market mechanism that rewards businesses to reduce it?

I can give you about a half-dozen other diseases that are also going to become epidemic at rates we've never seen, costing our health care systems billions of dollars.

I find these private members' motions very important, but when you divorce the causal effect and you don't want to address the epidemics that are going to come with this new climate beyond food shortages and other things, we're not having a realistic discussion.

These are real vectors for disease: the rapidly changing environment—because climate is going to impact a two-degree change in the United States. The mean

temperature change in Ontario will be one of the highest in the world at five degrees, and we become the next new belt, because, as you know, these insects and these mites have heat—thermal—detectors. That's how they move.

Mr. Speaker, I will close. I will leave some time for my friend. But, please, can we have a serious conversation about health and climate change and stop playing political games with it?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I am very pleased to stand and speak today in support of my colleague's bill, Bill 27, the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act, 2014.

I've been standing since 2011 reading petitions and sharing stories from people in my riding who will be saying today, "Finally." I thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for standing tall and doing what's right by the citizens in Ontario.

I have so much information here. It would have been early in my first term that I met with a lady by the name of Doris. She's from Cranbrook. She's just a phenomenal lady who has suffered with Lyme disease for years upon years.

Just last week, during our constit week I had the opportunity to hear the story from a gentleman by the name of Lyn, who was the first person in Huron county to be diagnosed with Lyme disease.

Before I get into those stories, I also congratulate the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for recognizing the importance of looking at the big picture. So much is at stake. I think about the genuine concern about Ebola. There's a program associated with the agri-food sector called the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. For the first time ever in decades, this particular organization was going to send their current class to Africa, but unfortunately that trip was cancelled because of the fear and concern over Ebola, and, most importantly, how it's diagnosed and treated. So I congratulate our member for recognizing the importance of looking at the big picture.

I also think about West Nile disease. I think I, in my family, must have the sweetest blood, because I am the magnet for mosquitoes. I can't help but express concern every day that we're out and about.

When it comes back to Lyme, I think about the people who ask for permission to go hunting at the back of our farm in the bush when deer season rolls along. I think about the people who have met with me in my constituency office, expressing concern. I also think about the people who have done so much and incurred so much.

Just this past week, on Tuesday, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk held a media conference. He had a brave individual sit beside him to share his story. I was chatting with Will's wife. Knowing how this has rolled out, I said, "How much have you had to spend to try to maintain a certain level of health for your husband?" Speaker, they had gone into debt \$40,000. It's not right, it needs to stop, and we need to start identifying opportunities to help these people instead of driving them to the States and driving them to Europe for treatment.

I also want to recognize that this is not new. Finally, we're doing something about it today. In 2013, *Better Farming*, a publication that's known widely through rural Ontario, celebrated something. One of their journalists, Mary Baxter, wrote an article called "Lyme Disease: The Painful and Hard-to-Diagnose Condition." It was nominated and won best agricultural story in the world. I just want to recognize that the award was announced in Sweden, where judges called Baxter's piece "beautiful" and said it used "a nice mix of human-interest storytelling and scientific research, exemplifying great journalism." That was back in 2011, but I can tell you—and if I could get a page to bring me another glass of water, I'd appreciate it—people have suffered for so much longer.

A brief snippet out of Lyn's diary: "Feeling better, but will more than likely be on a long road back to normal. Starting to feel someone is sitting on my chest. I guess doctors will figure this out, hopefully." Then, sadly, he continues to write in his diary: "Had to retire earlier than I had wanted to." It's just not right.

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Then there's Deborah, who has quite a story. She contracted Lyme herself, but found she had passed it on to her three sons. When I first met her a couple of years ago, her children were ages five, seven and eight, and our eyes just welled and our hearts broke when she spoke about her oldest child, Caleb, who had been struggling with his health since the age of three. He had had countless tests. In the end, he ended up having to see a psychiatrist. That's where, ultimately, he was put on anti-psychotic drugs because they were desperate. His brain was in a fog. He was unable to learn even basic academics. He had regressed to a point of no longer being able to read and write. Deborah met with the school board and they made a painful decision to send him 45 minutes, one bus ride, each way, to a different classroom, where he could get the emotional and behavioural support that he needed.

Doris, a champion who pulls everyone together in support, has suffered long with Lyme disease. It broke my heart last week when she shared with me that there were times she would just want to die, because people don't understand how Lyme disease affects an individual. That's when Deborah said even her own son, now at the age of 11, would rather die than continue living this, because they felt there was no hope.

But now, due to the member from Haldimand-Norfolk and the support of the House today, we do have some hope.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Merci, monsieur le Président. Premièrement, je veux soutenir le bill from my honourable colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk, Bill 27, on the provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne—for example, mosquito-borne—or zoonotic diseases, meaning diseases that are transferred directly to human beings through animals.

I think much has been said. I recognize, of course, the remarks of the Minister of Health, who reinforced and affirmed the provincial existing framework and all the various programs and our liaison with public health units across the province and designated hospitals for high-end illnesses, be it SARS or be it Ebola. For example, Etobicoke General Hospital in Etobicoke North was one of the sites and centres for SARS control. So we're very well, I think, apprised of the potential dangers that are out there.

I would accept what some of our colleagues have said with reference to Lyme disease—Lyme, by the way, being a town in the state of Connecticut from which originally this sort of tick-borne illness was seen, originally diagnosed. It's got a sort of strangely named bacterium, by the way, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and I'll probably have to give that exact spelling to Hansard later.

Of course, one of the confusions, and perhaps I might use this opportunity, is that the symptoms can be very, very non-specific. You're looking at stiff neck, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, headaches, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain and, of course, this sort of specialized migrating bull's-eye kind of skin rash. So it can be very confusing. It's not common that patients will present with all of these. They'll have their own menu choice of them, and that's unfortunately one of the reasons why perhaps diagnosis is not done quite as early as it might be. Like everything in medicine, that of course affects outcomes.

I certainly support your bill. I applaud you for it, particularly as a non-physician bringing forth this intense vocabulary and this very worthy bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk. You have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker, and I certainly thank the presenters—actually, a good mix of presenters and a good mix of experience: two physicians, two cabinet ministers, a number of people that obviously, in our role, have a lot of hands-on listening to constituents. I don't have time to go through all of the constituencies represented in the speaking.

But with respect to Lyme, there is more work to do. In the province of Ontario, we're all very proud of our health care system and we continually strive to improve that system. With respect to Lyme alone, which many people referred to, there is controversy. There are disputes. There is so much out on the Internet.

I'm very pleased the member for Huron-Bruce made mention of the fellow that was in the media studio, Will Yelland, from my constituency office. He weighed 220 pounds when he came down with this. I think he has lost about 100 pounds. He wanted to be a cop, and he's on hold right now and has spent 40 grand.

I think we're positioned well for Ebola, an emerging infectious, zoonotic disease. Our Minister of Health, before he was elected, as many know—his background in public health and tropical medicine, and his travels in the tropics, can serve us well.

All I ask is that we continue to improve, to consolidate, to pull together our efforts into the provincial

framework I am proposing, and most importantly, an action plan to deal with not only the diseases talked about today but those that may come along in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

Orders of the day.

PLANNING STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Milczyn moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Planning Act and certain regulations / Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et certains règlements.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm proud to rise today to speak to my private member's bill entitled the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act. The purpose of this act is to make certain changes to the Planning Act which would benefit communities and municipalities across the province, as well as some amendments to the City of Toronto Act which reflect the unique legislation which governs that city.

Individuals, communities and municipalities across the province have grown increasingly frustrated with the manner in which planning decisions are made in Ontario. Ontarians assume that democratically elected municipal councils make the rules and decisions on local planning matters. However, that belief is routinely proven wrong by the Ontario Municipal Board.

Last year this government conducted a consultation exercise on Planning Act reforms. I was chair of the city of Toronto's planning growth management committee. I led the city's process to develop a response to that consultation. There was stakeholder consultation; we listened to various stakeholders. Toronto city council unanimously endorsed a series of positions upon which this bill has been constructed.

I also want to note that city of Toronto planning staff consulted with many of their peers in Ontario, their planning peers, in the formulation of positions to find those that had some common ground with other municipalities. I want to thank Jennifer Keesmaat and Kerri Voumvakis, the senior staff at the city, for their thoughtful assistance in this.

This bill contains amendments to existing legislation that will address three broad themes. It aims to restore more local decision-making on planning matters back to local government while balancing the need to continue to

maintain an accessible mechanism for appealing poor decisions to the Ontario Municipal Board. It will modernize certain aspects of the Planning Act, and it also seeks to grant municipalities increased powers to address the pressing demands created by growth and development. There are some specific amendments to the City of Toronto Act.

In terms of restoring local decision-making, this act will prohibit appeals to the OMB of official plan amendments that are made by a municipality to conform with changes to provincial policy or provincial growth plans. It will also require the Minister of Municipal Affairs to endeavour to align changes between provincial policy statements and provincial growth plans and provide direction on their interpretation.

Municipally initiated official plan amendments, once they come into force, would also no longer be subject to appeal to the OMB for a period of five years.

Zoning bylaws that implement municipally initiated official plan amendments would no longer be subject to appeal for a period of five years from when they came into force, and site-specific zoning bylaws would no longer be subject to appeal for a period of five years from when they came into force.

1530

Municipalities will also be able to pass bylaws which would restrict the making of applications to the committee of adjustment with respect to a site-specific bylaw for three years from the passage of that bylaw unless the variance being sought is truly technical or housekeeping in nature.

This bill proposes to require the OMB to make decisions that are consistent with those of the municipality and restrict the ability to introduce new evidence to the OMB that was not used or available to the local council when they were making their decision. Appellants would have to clearly explain their reasons for an appeal and list the evidence they propose to make their application upon. Also, the timing for filing appeals would be lengthened in a number of instances—official plan amendments from 180 days to 240, concurrent zoning bylaw amendments to an OPA from 180 to 240 days, and a zoning bylaw amendment from 120 days to 180 days. These changes will allow municipalities more time to review proposals without the threat of a pre-emptive appeal to the OMB.

All of these measures are meant to ensure that local municipalities have the final word on many planning matters, that the OMB's scope to overturn municipal decisions is circumscribed and that general appeals against an entire official plan will be curtailed as having insufficient supporting evidence to proceed. These measures will restore the public's confidence in the planning system, restore accountability to elected officials and potentially save municipalities significant resources that are expended on preparing for and defending against numerous appeals.

I also want to be clear that none of these measures will abolish the OMB and the ability for property owners to appeal applications or decisions. However, it will limit

the ability to frustrate local municipalities' ability to approve and enforce properly formulated plans or bylaws.

This bill will also modernize the planning process. Electronic notices will now be allowed and deemed to be valid notice.

People all over this province cannot understand what a minor variance is. The four tests established to assess what a minor variance is are too vague, and this bill would require the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations to define concepts for the determination of whether a variance being sought is minor or not and what the meaning of the term "desirable for the appropriate development or use of land" means.

Municipalities now throughout the province of Ontario have the right to establish local appeal bodies for committee of adjustment matters, but they do not have the right to revert back to the OMB if they so choose. This bill would give municipalities that right to make a choice and be able to change their minds in the future. It will also give municipalities the right to set appropriate fees to cover the costs of the committee of adjustment and local appeal body without the right of people to appeal against those fees.

Finally, the third theme of these amendments is about giving municipalities more tools to manage the impacts of growth and development. This bill will grant municipalities the right to promote built form that is well-designed, encourages a sense of place and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant. It may seem obvious that municipalities would expect excellence in design; however, they have had too few tools to mandate it from developers.

This bill will grant municipalities the power to try to address the shortage of affordable housing in the province by allowing municipalities the power to implement inclusionary zoning bylaws that would mandate the provision of affordable housing in new developments that contain 20 or more new housing units.

This bill will allow municipalities to pass bylaws implementing a formula-based mechanism to secure community benefits in exchange for increases in height or density under section 37 of the Planning Act, thereby creating a more transparent and predictable process for both developers and communities impacted by development.

The amendments proposed that are specific to the city of Toronto are the ability of the city to be able to enforce conditions related to the development onto the title of a property. So when a property changes hands from one developer to another, the new property owner, the new developer, wouldn't be able to try and renegotiate everything.

This would also, specifically to the City of Toronto Act, prohibit the ability to appeal the fees that would be set for the city of Toronto's local appeal body. It would also instill within the legislation that the local appeal body, within its rules of procedure, would have to mandate mediation and related procedures.

Also related to the city of Toronto, which has a very specific official plan, it would amend the Building Code Act to require the chief building official of the city to apply the rental housing conversion and demolition policies of the official plan as applicable law against the granting of demolition or building permits for the conversion of residential rental properties. What that means is that in the city of Toronto, where we have several hundred thousand units of rental housing, we have very strong policies protecting against the conversion of those properties. However, the chief building official, under the Building Code Act, might still be compelled to issue a building permit or a demolition permit for those. That is a loophole that causes angst to hundreds of thousands of tenants within the city of Toronto.

Also related to the city of Toronto, this bill proposes to prevent appeals of interim control bylaws to allow planners and communities the time to carefully study the future growth in a neighbourhood.

This bill, if adopted, will restore more local decision-making on planning matters to Ontarians. It will increase transparency and accountability in the planning review process, and it will allow for better alignment between provincial policy statements, growth plans and local official plans. It will give cities, towns and villages across the province of Ontario more of a say—a final say—in how their communities will grow and evolve.

Mr. Speaker, I have 25 years of experience in planning matters, not just as a city councillor but as practitioner, designing, consulting and assisting the development industry in moving forward, so I know both sides of these issues.

These amendments are ones that the city of Toronto, in consultation with stakeholders within the city of Toronto and in consultation with professional planners in other municipalities in this province—these were positions that were brought forward to the government as part of the consultation process around planning reform. These reforms would allow development to continue apace. They would ensure, however, that those who are elected in their local councils, when they stand up, pass a bylaw and tell their residents that the process that they participated in to establish a bylaw or an official plan or a secondary plan—that it has some meaning, that zoning bylaws don't simply become zoning guidelines and official plans don't simply become something that can be amended on a daily basis.

I trust that members of this Legislature listened carefully, and I look forward to their comments. I hope I can count on all of their support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise to speak to Bill 39, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act. I want to congratulate the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for introducing his first private member's bill. Congratulations. I understand that he has a lot of good ideas. I wouldn't say all his good ideas are in this bill, but a great number of them are. I want to commend him for that.

However, I have some real problems with the bill. Most of it relates to the consultation. We heard in the presentation that the consultation was with the municipalities and with the planners who work for municipalities, but I didn't hear of the consultation that's required between the people of the cities and towns in Ontario, the other side of the equation.

This bill was introduced Tuesday afternoon, 48 hours ago. In my experience in this province over the last 30 years, consultation in planning matters is measured in months and years—the consultation to put in new legislation—not 48 hours.

1540

It makes over 20 changes to two pieces of legislation and two regulations, one of which is under a separate piece of legislation. Some of these changes, as the member described, would have a significant impact on planning and land use in Ontario. In fact, I've seen many government bills that have made far less significant changes, which is very concerning to me.

The nature of a private member's bill is that it has less debate and often less public scrutiny than a government bill. Today, we have 12 minutes per caucus to present our concerns on second reading of a bill that impacts every riding in the province of Ontario—only 12 minutes to lay out what amendments are needed if this bill were to proceed to committee.

I know that the MPP from Etobicoke–Lakeshore has a municipal background, and I hope this bill is the result of his personal experience and thoughts. I hope that it isn't, as some people have suggested, an attempt by the government to sneak through significant legislation on a Thursday afternoon.

I don't have time to list all our concerns with this bill, but I do want to go through a few of the items that I have concerns about, particularly those that reduce consultation and take away the right for members of the public to appeal.

Mr. Speaker, this bill contains an amendment to section 2 of the Planning Act. As members may recall, this section of the act sets out the areas of provincial interest that municipal councils must have regard to when carrying out their responsibilities. This covers important areas such as the protection of ecological systems, protection of agricultural resources and accessibility for persons with disabilities. These are core values that we all share. They're fundamentals.

This section also includes a commitment to the minimization of waste. To the many people in my riding who are fighting a landfill site proposal to ensure our drinking water is kept safe, that is a key value and very important.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends section 2 to add promotion of built form that is well-designed and “encourages a sense of place.” I'm not sure that most of us could even significantly define “sense of place.”

I agree with the goal of having attractive buildings, but I don't believe that it is equivalent to those other values. I don't believe that it belongs at the same level as other

provincial interests—the core values—outlined in the section. Each of these items becomes a responsibility and a burden to municipal councils. When it is a key value that we all share, I think that councils are happy to take on that burden, but adding less important items to the list results in it becoming over-regulation and red tape for our municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also concerned that this bill reduces the ability of people and organizations to appeal decisions and actions in numerous ways. First, it removes the ability of people to appeal fees charged by appeal boards, which means that these fees can be raised to discourage appeals.

This bill also makes changes to the Municipal Board such that appeals must be consistent with original decisions. That means there's really no longer a real appeal, whether it is for community groups facing a development on environmentally sensitive areas or a company trying to build a factory that has been blocked by not-in-my-backyard syndrome. There would be no opportunity to change a decision and no opportunity to correct an error if one has been made.

The bill also changes the rules to address how new information is presented at appeal hearings that would have a material impact on the decision. If the municipality submits recommendations within the proper time frame, the appeal board has to make a decision consistent with recommendations. Again, this eliminates the ability of having a real appeal.

The bill also lengthens the time before appeals can be launched. If someone has applied to a municipality for a zoning change or an official plan amendment and the municipality doesn't deal with it currently, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board after 180 days of no decision. That's about six months. This bill lengthens the time to 240 days before an appeal can be launched and the applicant can get a decision. Again, that will not speed up development.

The bill also removes the right of people in Toronto to appeal an interim bylaw, and it would block landowners from applying to the committee of adjustment for a variance for three years following the passage of a site-specific bylaw.

Taken together, all these changes will result in a significant reduction in the ability for people to appeal decisions. That certainly doesn't make the system more fair, and it doesn't make the system better.

In September, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was directed in his mandate letter to lead “a review of the scope and effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board,” but before the minister has had an opportunity to do that review, with little or no consultation, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore is making dramatic changes to the Ontario Municipal Board and burying them in what appears to be an omnibus bill presented here in private members' business. We agree with the need to review the Ontario Municipal Board—and I want to commend him for bringing that forward—and make changes that ensure that it works better and is

more transparent. We're also looking forward to the consultations and to hearing from all the parties that would be impacted, not a select few of the parties. We cannot support legislation that would make significant changes to the powers of the OMB before that consultation occurs. Frankly, I don't expect the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—I think he would have trouble supporting this bill, too. We'll see that after the end of the debate.

This bill would also limit public input on provincial policy statements by amending the section that sets a requirement for the minister to consult on these statements, adding a requirement that the minister must "seek to obtain the timely approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council." In other words, "Don't consult too much; get the approval done so we don't have to wait." That would actually force the minister to limit and rush his consultation. This is rather ironic coming from a member of the government that is always talking about conversations and open government.

I hope that this government, rather than supporting this omnibus bill, which was introduced too late to give members and stakeholders sufficient time, will instead focus on the consultation. The changes in this bill will impact people across Ontario, such as community groups like the Oxford People Against the Landfill in my riding, who want to ensure that they can appeal any decision that would allow a landfill in our community. It would also impact people who are building homes for families across Ontario, the home builders of Ontario. It will impact companies who are trying to build factories and create jobs. It will impact environmental groups who are fighting to protect sensitive land. It will impact municipal councillors who are working to try to do smart land use planning for their community and trying to comply with the Planning Act. But unfortunately, very few of those people were even aware that this bill is being debated today. Even fewer have had an opportunity to read it or the time to research the impact of the changes.

We have a number of very important reviews due or promised over the next five years: the Municipal Elections Act, the Ontario building code, the greenbelt, Oak Ridges moraine, Niagara Escarpment, the growth plan, the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and many others. I hope that these will include real consultations, that the minister will really listen to those people involved and that he won't introduce or support legislation that makes changes in those areas before taking the time to hear from those people who will be impacted by those changes.

Again, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for putting the bill forward, which gives us the opportunity to talk about important land use planning issues. I'm not finding fault with the need to make changes; I'm just finding fault with the process we're using. While we have concerns about many of the items in this bill, there are some positives, and I hope the member would consider a bill that focuses on those items, a bill that can be properly debated in private

members' business, given the right scrutiny, be put through and be the first private member's bill passed into legislation. I just don't believe this is the bill that can do it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm happy to rise and speak on this issue. It's certainly in my critic portfolio area. The member from Parkdale–High Park has brought a similar bill forward, certainly around the pieces of inclusionary zoning.

Hon. James J. Bradley: —the conservation authority amendment.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's pretty good, Jim.

Ms. Catherine Fife: He's just trying to get in Hansard.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I know. I know he is.

The member from Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo, has brought this bill forward four times. She's tabled it four times. In fact, it's tabled as we are sitting here debating the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore's bill today.

In 2010, I believe, or 2011, the bill actually received second reading. It passed, but once again, it went nowhere. Which leads me to, why is the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore raising this as a private member's bill? Why isn't the government bringing this bill forward? They supported it when Ms. DiNovo brought to it the House the last time. If it's such an important issue—and I believe that it is—then the government should be bringing it forward as a government bill, and the member could then be bringing forward some other important bill.

1550

We all know what inclusionary zoning is. I've heard about it a lot over the last three or four years. It's a tool that can be used by municipalities. It's not mandatory. All it does is give municipalities that want to create affordable housing in their jurisdictions the ability to do so. There have been many municipalities across the U.S. and Europe that have done this very successfully over the years. There are numerous municipalities across Ontario, there are numerous city councillors and regional councillors, and there are numerous jurisdictions across Ontario that have all supported inclusionary zoning.

A number of agencies like the Canadian housing federation and other housing advocates across this province have all supported it as well. But unfortunately, we've been waiting six years to get it approved. Maybe it will get approved this time, now that we have a sitting member bringing it forward, but I won't hold my breath.

So how can we bring inclusionary zoning to Ontario? Well, I heard the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. He makes some good points in this bill, but I got up and spoke to the ministerial statement just a couple of hours ago on National Housing Day. We have hundreds of thousands of people in this province—165,000 people, I believe—waiting for affordable housing. That's households, not people. So it could be as high as 400,000 or 500,000 people in the province waiting for affordable

housing. This is one of the tools that would give municipalities the ability to go out and require some assistance from developers.

Here in the city of Toronto, very few rental units get built across the city. I think it's as low as 1,200 or 1,400 units a year, when in fact we need 10,000 units a year just to keep up. The population in Toronto is increasing by 100,000 people a year, and all of those people need affordable housing. So I think that the government needs to move forward with this inclusionary zoning proposal.

There are other ways to assist people who are in need. We need to get rid of vacancy decontrol. For those of you who don't know, that means that when somebody moves out of an apartment that is rent-controlled at \$800 a month, the landlord can increase that rent to \$1,500 a month if they want. That's kind of the second-worst thing for affordable housing in this province.

We also need to get rid of the rent control piece that exempts buildings built after 1991 and make sure that every rental unit in this province actually has rent controls applied.

As I said, there has been lots of support for this issue, and I really think that it's time that we move forward. I know that the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore has some other issues in his bill that I'm not going to address today. I'm sure that if this bill ever sees the light of day and gets to a committee level, we'll have lots of time to hear from those who are opposed and those who are for and hopefully make the amendments work for all.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Han Dong: It's a pleasure to rise and speak in this House on behalf of residents of Trinity–Spadina. It is, indeed, a privilege to be able to represent them in the Legislature.

I want to first of all applaud the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for this private member's bill that speaks to some concerning issues in the city of Toronto. In my riding of Trinity–Spadina, we've experienced explosive growth in the downtown core. I've lived there for the last 14 years, so I've witnessed first-hand what type of growth we are experiencing there, and I want to share some of that experience today in this House.

At first, it was quite exciting to see the gentrification of my riding. You see new development projects happening; you see new shops coming in. As I was experiencing significant stages in my life—getting married, having kids and acquiring property myself—I started to realize that there is a significant lack of services and infrastructure in this riding, things like green spaces, parks. In the downtown core, we don't have the luxury of having big front yards and backyards, so we have very tiny ones. We need green spaces and public parks where we can walk our dogs or take our kids to a playground. We don't have that much space left in the downtown core.

Again, daycares and schools: When a lot of people moved into those condos at first, it was closer to work, so they figured it was a transitional place: "I'm just going to

be there for a few years." But after five years, six years, close to 10 years, they want to form a family, start raising kids, so they're looking around for daycare spaces and schools, and they can't find any—all these problems.

The biggest issue I heard while knocking on doors earlier this summer was transit, congestion. The root cause of all of this inadequate infrastructure—there's something wrong with the current planning system. I've spoken to many residents who said to me that they want to make sure the local elected officers, including councillors and, quite honestly, their MPPs, get involved in making sure that these planning decisions stay local. The residents' association should actually have a say in how their community should look in the next little while.

I think this bill brought out something that's very interesting: proposing some predictability in the planning system we have right now in the city of Toronto.

Also, it talks about eliminating the possibility of someone who may be playing some little game with the existing system; for example, if I were to develop a condo and I come to an agreement to build 30 storeys—and I need to go through the amendments of the zoning bylaw to achieve that—but after a couple of years, right before I start building it, after I pre-sold so many units, I go to the city and say, "I want to change that. I want additional height and density in this." I think this bill is effective to eliminate these kinds of possibilities, because to me, there is also a consumer protection aspect to it. If I'm an investor and I put my money down to buy a condo—it could be for my own living or it could be a rental unit—and two years after, I find out there's additional height, additional density in this condo I'm buying into, I may not be too happy with that. If I were going to have a family later on, I would be concerned about the density in the community that I'm living in.

Another key issue I hear over and over again is the so-called section 37. Basically, for those of you viewers who are not too familiar with this, it's a section that allows the municipalities to be compensated for additional height and density, but there is a serious lack of transparency right now about section 37. We don't know how much exactly is there from section 37.

1600

The money, I assume, is well-used to bring additional infrastructure to the community, whether it's a park, whether it's a community centre, whether it is some art on the street to promote cultural diversity that we have the pleasure of enjoying in the downtown core, but we don't know how much is in there. Really, the money was meant for more service, more infrastructure—perhaps a school—those necessities that a community cannot go without, especially in the case of extra density.

I would like to share some of my time with my colleague from Beaches–East York, but I think this bill has shone some light on some of the possibilities. Quite honestly, I think it's quite creative. I'm glad we have a member who was the chair in the city of Toronto's planning and growth management committee for quite a lengthy time, and very knowledgeable on this issue. It's

fortunate for the House to have a member like the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

One last thing I want to share with the House is that I myself personally attended and participated in a public consultation last winter with regard to OMB reform. It is public consultation. It is across the province. I myself was in it, and I heard a lot of suggestions about changes to the Planning Act. I think this bill brought up this awareness and this need to maybe take a look at some changes.

I also want to mention that my predecessor, the former member for Trinity–Spadina, Mr. Rosario Marchese, was a strong advocate for making sure that planning decisions stay local, although I disagreed with his private member's bill with regard to exempting Toronto from the OMB, because I think that that will put the community in a place where there is no appeal body. Again, this bill talks about different tools to realize that option of having a minor variance appeal body at the municipal level.

So I welcome the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore's private member's bill. I feel very personally attached to this bill and I look forward to discussing this more in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Kitchener–Waterloo.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): — Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's right, and that's what I'm going to talk about.

I want to commend the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing forward his first private member's bill. Obviously, he does bring an informed background to this piece of legislation.

It is a private member's bill; we all have this kernel of hope that they're going to go someplace. My first one was on limiting the powers of prorogation, and I don't know—that died on the order paper after 11 days here. The whole place closed it down.

But I'm going to tell you why I think the Ontario Municipal Board needs reforming, and I'm happy to see you touch on it in here. The member had said that municipalities don't have the tools to manage or negotiate with developers. I am the first person to concede that municipalities have a very tension-filled, awkward relationship with developers. Some of those developers are incredibly aggressive. Some of them make certain donations. There is an influence. Some of them are very progressive, and they understand. They have bought the intensification model, which we fully support.

But Waterloo region was targeted by the Places to Grow legislation as a region which should grow to a certain amount and the province told the region of Waterloo how to grow. So they set about doing the consultation—almost 10 full years of thorough consultation. I will say this about the residents of Kitchener–Waterloo: They are informed; they are engaged. If they become enraged, they become even more engaged. So they

showed up, and they helped the region shape what is a very progressive plan for growing, forward.

They developed this long-range, strategic plan for growth. It has hard lines around our rural areas. It has targeted neighbourhoods for intensification. It's built all the way along the LRT, which is a joint project with the province. The province did originally say they were going to give two thirds, then they said one third and, fingers crossed, the money will flow. That project is going to go ahead, and the success of that project is very much dependent on a progressive plan.

The region developed their plan and tabled it. It was challenged by developers to the Ontario Municipal Board. The Ontario Municipal Board found in favour of the developers, and not by a small amount. The region wants to grow by 84 hectares. The OMB said, "No, you're going to grow by 1,084 hectares." They overruled 10 years of consultation and 10 years of planning. They overruled the province. This is a big thing; right? So the province joined the region of Waterloo in the appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. This is how crazy it is. The Liberal government is joining the region of Waterloo to protest the OMB not upholding its own provincial legislation.

It gets even better. It's Thursday afternoon; I'm trying to keep us awake here.

Then there was the question of bias on behalf of one of the lawyers because she had done some sort of work with the OMB and she was part of the OMB. So then the Ontario Municipal Board decided to investigate themselves to see if they were biased. This is Monty Python material here.

It's very clear that the Ontario Municipal Board needs to be reformed on the operational side, not just the travelling road show that happened last year where everyone got together and said, "I like it," or, "I don't like it." Who cares about liking it or not liking it? It's supposed to uphold provincial legislation, and it's not. These members on these boards are overruling municipalities and therefore they are overruling the democratic rights of the municipalities who are duly elected by the citizens, so therefore they are undermining democracy in the province of Ontario. It's a really big thing.

Some people say, "We need it." You know what? I don't think it can be fixed. I don't think that it can be fixed. Our member from Trinity–Spadina last year said, "For municipalities who have the capacity, who have the wherewithal, who have the knowledge to develop a progressive planning strategy, they should not be subjected to the Ontario Municipal Board overruling those local decisions."

To conclude, there is a cost to an unelected, unaccountable board overruling municipalities, both from an environmental perspective—that's a cost to the local taxpayers because infrastructure investment gets spread out. Obviously, there's a problem with funding infrastructure; that's why the Liberal government is so desperately trying to find cash in all the wrong places.

I am a little bit hopeful—that little kernel. I'm hopeful that the member, in his experience, can convince the

Liberal government to follow what all of us know to be true: that if intensification is going to be successful, if the province does want us to grow in a progressive, affordable and sustainable way so that we can have shared prosperity in the province of Ontario, then the Ontario Municipal Board needs to be either pulled out or restructured. On this side of the House, we just don't have the faith in the Liberal government to fix it entirely, and we do not think that the municipalities should be undermined by the Ontario Municipal Board.

In case you didn't realize, I feel pretty strongly about it. I hope that the region is successful in its appeal because it's costing everybody. Progressive planning should be a win-win-win for everybody, and in this case, it is not. So we're going to be supporting this bill.

1610

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to my colleague the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for bringing this very, very important bill down. We are, as the member from Trinity–Spadina said, very lucky to have him on this file. Here's a man with considerable experience, a trained architect, a planner for years before he got into politics, where he could bring those passions to city hall and share them with the planning growth committee. I know he knows of what he speaks.

This is a very important issue. Certainly, in my riding in Beaches–East York, this was one of the most important issues going door to door, particularly in the southern end of the ward, known as the Beach. The residents' associations were up in arms about the repeated—repeated—attacks on democratically elected decision-making at the municipal level because, ultimately, the OMB was interpreting rules that were so broad in a way that was not satisfying the neighbourhoods.

I have so many neighbourhood associations in my riding. You have to appreciate that the Greater Beaches Neighbourhood Association is an umbrella group now of the Beach Triangle Association, the Kew Beach Neighbourhood Association, Toronto Beach East Residents Association, Friends of Glen Davis Ravine, the Norwood Park Neighbourhood Association, the Beach Waterfront Community Association and the Balmy Beach Residents Association. There's even the Danforth East Community Association and Kingston Road Village.

Every single part of my riding is so well-represented because the greatest benefit we got from the OMB over the years is a rallying cry for residents to come together and say, "They're going to do what?" We've seen this time and time again as developments come up, and residents are fighting because they want to preserve the unique characters of their neighbourhoods. The developer comes in on the basis of a very vaguely worded official plan. The neighbours say, "Well, we can't have this building. It's too big. It's dominating. The traffic studies are fake. The whole character of the cladding is wrong. It's going to change the character of the neighbourhood." So they rally together and they discover how expensive it

is to go to the OMB. They discover how long it is and that they're outgunned.

What I find fascinating about the member for Oxford—and I always enjoy listening to your remarks. You're so well informed on so many of these aspects. Interestingly enough, I get the sense that your residents' associations want to use the OMB to protect against bad decision-making at a local level, where our residents' associations don't want the OMB to protect developers from good decision-making in our municipalities.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's the first time I agree with you.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you. I appreciate that.

What's so important about this legislation is that it forces decision-making back down to the municipalities.

I made a couple of promises in my election. My first one will be satisfied with the passage of the tipping bill, which I brought forward, which was a very important promise I made. But the second one was to be fundamentally participating and finding ways that we do circumscribe the decision-making power of the OMB such that local decision planning, neighbourhood plans and secondary plans are respected by the people at the OMB so they can't be overturning decisions that were made by democratically elected people.

I appreciate the support we're going to get from the third party. I'm very much going to appreciate if we can bring the consultation in during the committee process.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

There being no further debate, I go back to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the members for Oxford, Welland, Trinity–Spadina, Kitchener–Waterloo and Beaches–East York for their comments.

I want to first respond to the member from Oxford. I know he had a long career in municipal politics before being elected here for a long time. I can assure him there is no subterfuge on this side of the House. This bill took some seven weeks for legislative counsel to draft for me. That is, perhaps, the reason for the short notice to the Legislature.

To the member for Oxford's one concern that it would take away the rights of residents to appeal municipal decisions: No. If a municipality makes a decision, the property owners and the residents can appeal it. The difference here is, once they make a plan or a bylaw, then for a certain period of time, that is the law. They won't entertain continuous amendments to it, but if a municipality were to choose to grant an amendment, that would be appealable. I'll explain that to the member from Oxford when he's listening to me.

I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who hit the nail on the head about some of the real difficulties with the OMB and the disjuncture between provincial policy and provincial policy-making and the OMB's interpretation of it or interference with it.

To my colleagues from Trinity–Spadina and Beaches–East York: The experiences in highly urbanized

municipalities might be different than in more rural municipalities. But I welcome this going to a standing committee. I welcome having consultation with residents of Ontario on it. I welcome, in one way or another, many of these things becoming the law of Ontario in the not-too-distant future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LUNG HEALTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SANTÉ PULMONAIRE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item 13, standing in the name of Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. McGarry has moved second reading of Bill 41, An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member for Cambridge?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN CONCERNING VECTOR-BORNE AND ZOO NOTIC DISEASES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE CADRE ET LE PLAN D'ACTION PROVINCIAUX CONCERNANT LES MALADIES ZOO NOTIQUES ET À TRANSMISSION VECTORIELLE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Barrett has moved second reading of Bill 27, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mr. Barrett?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I would request the legislation be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the Standing

Committee on the Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

PLANNING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Milczyn has moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Planning Act and certain regulations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1618 to 1623.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All members take their seats.

Mr. Milczyn has moved second reading of Bill 39. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Baker, Yvan
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Colle, Mike
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fife, Catherine

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Hoskins, Eric
Kwinter, Monte
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sergio, Mario
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Hardeman, Ernie

Munro, Julia
Pettapiece, Randy
Scott, Laurie

Walker, Bill

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 34; the nays are 7.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to Mr. Milczyn.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE
INTEGRITY ACT, 2014LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE
DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): When this item of business was last debated, we had completed a combined speech of the members for Windsor–Tecumseh and Timiskaming–Cochrane. I don't see them here. Further debate?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Okay, a two-minuter. Response? No?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): No. We go to further debate.

The member for York–Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I am pleased today to rise to speak to Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. This bill would prohibit the sale of plasma and blood products in Ontario. While I appreciate the intent of this bill to protect those who are in need of plasma, I also have concerns that this bill will, in fact, reduce the supply of much-needed blood products.

My first comment on looking at this bill is that I find it ironic that this bill sets out to stop the sale and purchase of blood products in Ontario. Meanwhile, as we speak, 70% of Ontario's plasma comes from the United States, where plasma donors are paid. This just seems incredible to me, that there is this urgency by this government to stop the sale and purchase of blood products; meanwhile, they buy them from the US, where donors are paid. I guess what it means is that as long as we don't do it physically ourselves, we're willing to bend the principle of only donated blood.

The bill would not change Ontario's importing of plasma that was purchased beyond our borders. I'm really not quite sure why the government thinks it's logical to disallow the purchase of plasma in Ontario but allow the purchase of plasma from other jurisdictions where the plasma, in fact, has been purchased. This is certainly a paradox in my mind.

I am concerned that without the ability to purchase plasma, Ontario will have a shortage of the life-saving blood product. Currently, Ontario collects enough plasma

for transfusions, but does not produce enough plasma protein products to be entirely self-sufficient. I think all of us have heard the advertising by the blood agency about how many contributions are necessary for an accident and things like that.

1630

Instead of making the purchase of plasma illegal, perhaps the government can look at other solutions to increase the supply. Some patients in need of plasma require upwards of 1,000 donations each year. That means there have to be more than three donors per day. Demand is high, and it's only increasing. We must ensure that we have adequate supply. That surely has to be the most important aspect.

I would like to echo my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who recently called on the government to consult with stakeholders on Bill 21 to ensure those who would be affected by the bill have some input. This bill is complicated and has a life-or-death potential for its stakeholders, unfortunately. It is not a bill that we can just pass and not think about the consequences. We are impacting people's lives here, and in some cases whether they live or not. How can we not let those involved have a say in this bill? It is not right.

I know the government does not like to consult with people whom they are directly impacting. The child care file is an example, with providers and families affected by decreased child care spaces and rising costs because of Bill 10. But we should always consider our obligation to consult. People have a right to express their opinions. We need to let people whose lives depend on plasma have a choice on how they receive their life-saving product. If an individual is comfortable with the sale and purchase of a donor's plasma, then they should have that option knowing full well that checks and safeguards are already in place to keep people safe.

Recently, the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association, PPTA, came to Queen's Park to discuss with us, as members, the importance of this plasma. This association represents over 450 human plasma collection centres in North America and Europe, as well as the manufacturers of life-saving plasma protein therapies. Their members produce 80% of the plasma protein therapies in the US and 60% of those manufactured in Europe. They collaborate with more than 20 patient advocacy organizations. Collaboration, by the way, is something we should be doing as well with Bill 21.

According to the PPTA, patient groups are not opposed to compensated plasma donations, and using plasma from compensated donors is not unsafe. According to the PPTA, over the past 20 years there has not been a single reported transmission of HIV or hepatitis through any plasma collection by certified paid plasma donors. There are rigorous safety tests and standards in place in order to protect recipients of plasma donations. For these reasons, the PPTA opposes Bill 21.

Not only do we have to hear from those whose lives are affected by the need for plasma, but we need to hear from front-line health care workers and those who see the

day-to-day need for plasma and blood products. I know the Liberal government wants to rush their bills to royal assent, and we've had time allocations that have cut off the debate of many important bills, but I think this is an irresponsible course of action for Bill 21.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons have asked for consultations on this bill. I think that when a group like this suggests consultations, they should be mandatory. Who better to speak to a bill pertaining to our health care system than front-line health care workers? They know the urgent need for plasma better than anyone else. They see it every day. We need to hear their perspective and their ideas on what we should be doing to increase the supply of plasma, because they might have more interesting and innovative ideas than those which we have here in the Legislature.

We at Queen's Park do not have a monopoly on good ideas. Now, more than ever, we are seeing an increasing demand for plasma, as it is being used not just for emergency situations and short-term treatments but we are also seeing plasma used for other life-saving treatments and pharmaceutical products—for instance, those that help combat Alzheimer's and hemophilia. We must ensure that we don't have a shortage of plasma for those who need it immediately and for those who need it for their daily medical treatments.

As we see an increased demand for plasma, we will be stuck with the question of how we are able to receive more: either by increased donations here in Ontario or perhaps an increased purchase of plasma from the United States—again, where it is purchased from donors. In Ontario, where we have had a tradition of donated blood products, this is admirable. But it has also changed over time: There are so many uses that the blood products can be used for that the demand is growing as not only the population grows, and therefore just a natural increase that way, but it's the increase in the usage of the blood products that means that this kind of challenge is something our health care providers have to deal with.

As I said at the very beginning, it seems to me that there's no greater, higher, moral ground for us to argue that we'll buy it from somebody else outside our borders but we won't buy it from people within our borders. That seems very difficult, in my mind, to be able to support and be able to argue that it makes sense, quite frankly.

In Ontario, there are volunteers who donate plasma, similar to those who donate blood. I applaud these volunteers and thank them for their life-saving contributions and I implore more Ontarians to donate plasma.

As I just mentioned, we will be seeing an increased demand for plasma as we make advances in medical technology, and we cannot fall behind. The notion that we would fall behind because of a shortage is just unconscionable. The process by which we acquire—as I said moments ago, it is hard to justify why we can pay for it coming from somewhere else but we can't pay for it coming from our own homes.

People count on these technologies, and we must ensure that we have the products for the treatments so

that people can continue to live. I know that in this debate we have spoken about the Krever report, which studied the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s and made recommendations. I would like to cite from the report, which illustrates the difference between the 1980s and today—specifically, the technology and safeguards that have been implemented in the last 30 years which make our blood and plasma donation system safer. The report also cites the lack of oversight of donations, especially compared to the US and other countries:

1640

"The US Food and Drug Administration exercised a regulatory function over the US blood industry. It licensed and inspected blood banks that were involved in interstate commerce. It not only made regulations, but also supervised the blood industry by issuing guidelines and recommendations that were more than advisory. Compliance by the blood industry was expected and obtained. In Canada, the federal government"—this is the 1980s we're talking about—"regulated the manufacture of blood products and the collection of plasma by plasmapheresis, but it did not actively regulate the collection and processing of whole blood. Unlike its US counterpart, the Department of National Health and Welfare never issued guidelines or recommendations for the collection of blood in Canada. Until the summer of 1985, neither the federal government nor the provincial governments gave the Red Cross directions or showed any leadership in helping the Red Cross to cope with issues of transfusion-associated AIDS."

Furthermore, Canada did not screen donors as rigorously as we should have. I thought back to my own personal experience in the 1980s. Prior to being unable to donate blood, I regularly donated blood, as I thought it was sort of a civic duty, and I was healthy enough and so forth. But I do remember that it was by the individual—when they were asked about any illnesses they had. There was no proof; you just went in and said, "No, I don't have this." Certainly, there were people who did have blood disorders that they may not have known about themselves. The notion that we did not screen donors as rigorously as we should have is putting it mildly.

"The risk-reduction measures used in Canada can be summarized briefly. As early as January 1983, the Canadian Red Cross Society proposed that it would adopt the joint statement of the US blood bankers as a working policy, subject to approval by the medical directors of its 17 blood centres. That approval was given unanimously. In the months that followed, the Red Cross did not, however, implement any of the recommendations in the joint statement. In particular it did not implement the recommendation that 'all donors should be asked questions designed to elicit a history of night sweats, unexplained fevers, unexpected weight loss, lymphadenopathy or Kaposi's sarcoma,' the signs and symptoms of AIDS....

"The information known in the period ... was sufficient for public health officials, regulators, and blood bankers in the United States, western Europe, and

Australia to take preventive action to restrict the blood supply from persons at high risk of contracting AIDS. It should have prompted a similar response in Canada.”

Health Canada addresses the safety of paid plasma donors. Its response:

“Lessons of the tainted blood crisis must never be forgotten, and action has been taken since then to help prevent a tragedy like that from happening again. There are no plans to change Canada’s voluntary blood for transfusion donor system. However, technological advancements have made plasma products safer. New measures such as heat treatment, filtration or treatment with chemicals have been put into place to remove or inactivate viruses or other contaminants when producing blood products from plasma. There has not been a single case of transmission of hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV caused by plasma products in Canada since the introduction of modern manufacturing practices over 25 years ago, despite the fact that most of the plasma donors were paid.”

I think it’s really important to emphasize the conclusion here. What we are saying is that with technology, with the kinds of opportunities to adopt the best practices of other jurisdictions, it’s very clear from the record that our blood supply is safe. It has nothing to do with whether the individuals were paid or unpaid donors.

The fact that this bill suggests that somehow there’s some kind of medical or moral ground, as I already mentioned—to suggest that it’s okay if we import it from somewhere and they pay, and therefore we have to pay, but we’re not prepared to do that for the people of this province.

I think what we see from the quote from Health Canada sums up the argument that the status quo is working. The Liberals are seeking to change a system that is not broken and are yet again refusing to hear from the medical experts, the people in the field who are the most experienced.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to thank the member from York–Simcoe for her comments, and I’m pleased to have this opportunity to stand in support of the Voluntary Blood Donations Act to ban selling bodily fluids for a fee.

What we’re seeing here is a trend in our health care system to be a focus on wealth care almost. Rather than focusing on health and providing that, we’re focusing on—well, not we, but we’re seeing a trend in those who are offering care to want to be paid for it, to make that profit, and that shouldn’t be the focus. It should be about providing care, not providing wealth.

We’re seeing a trend in the upselling of procedures and treatments just to make more money off patients. This shouldn’t be allowed. We’re seeing medically superfluous tests that provide profits rather than necessary results. We’re hearing more about medical tourism—my point being, we’re seeing a trend in money being the focus rather than health. This is another place

where the system can’t be undermined for the sake of making a buck.

We know that there are dangerous loopholes, and we’d like to see them closed. We’d like to see the government really stand up, focus attention and stop turning a blind eye. We need oversight. I might be going off in a different direction, but we need oversight, and you can’t see things with a blind eye.

We had the opportunity earlier to meet with some people talking to us about poverty reduction. I see this as not an effective poverty reduction strategy. There will be individuals who will take advantage of this and make a dollar for selling their bodily fluids, and we can’t have that. We need to look after those who are most in need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member from Oshawa and the member from York–Simcoe for their comments. It’s an honour to stand before you today to speak about Bill 21.

Our voluntary blood system ensures that blood and plasma collection in this province remains safe and true to our common values. Health Canada, as we all know, has received licence applications from a for-profit company to open plasma collection sites in Ontario that would pay people for their plasma. Health Canada has left that decision up to the provinces, and since this matter arose, we have heard from many health care organizations, advocacy groups and individual Ontarians who are opposed to private, for-profit plasma collection. We have to listen to these voices. They have serious concerns about the safety and integrity of our blood system. Why? Because allowing payment for our blood puts our system at risk. It’s at risk of abuse, it’s at risk of unsafe practices, it’s at risk of people jeopardizing their health and the health of others in order to make a fast buck, as the member from Oshawa mentioned. It makes me uneasy about the notion of paying for bodily fluids or anything else in this vein—pardon the wording.

1650

In addition, the member from York–Simcoe says there aren’t any instances of unsafe paid plasma donations. But I know that if it were to happen that there was an instance of lack of safety in this, the members opposite would be the first to ask why we didn’t protect it.

I think that this is a system that works. That is why our government is taking steps to protect the integrity of our national public blood donation system and to avoid the development of a parallel private collection system in Ontario. I think introducing money into the equation is a dangerous step.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I’m happy to rise today to speak to Bill 21, following up on my colleague from York–Simcoe’s comments.

We talked a lot about blood plasma, and the member from Halton and the member from Oshawa—I just want to reinforce what my colleague has said. We don’t have enough blood products now. We are paying—and most

of it is from out of the country—for blood products that people have received money for. I'm just laying the reality of the system that exists out there. We have learned a lot—both the States and Canada, but especially Canada—from the tainted blood scandal. The technology advances now certainly make blood products safer than they were, to a large degree. You're looking at a situation where the need is much higher than the donations from here. It is just reality; you might as well deal with it.

I was happy to hear the member from Halton, on the government side, say that we need to hear from the professionals, and we do. So I don't expect time allocation on this bill—just to put it out there for you. My colleague from—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, I try—just so she understands that we might have it.

This is a very important bill. We saw one part of this bill that we're debating now come before the House before the election—a lot of discussion about it. There does have to be a lot more discussion. The College of Physicians and Surgeons, which was mentioned by my colleague from York-Simcoe, wants to be heard. I think that all cards have to be on the table.

Anyone who doesn't know the system will say, "My gosh, we're paying for blood products." But the reality is we're paying for them now because the demand is there. So let's look at the legislation in a realistic way and let's, of course, make it safe for everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to make comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from York-Simcoe for her comments around this important bill.

I had the opportunity, of course, to sit on the social policy committee for months, and we heard hundreds and hundreds of depositions. We also interviewed many people who were involved in the chemo dilution scandal here in the province. I'm glad to see that the bill is incorporating the 12 recommendations from Dr. Thiessen's review of Ontario's chemotherapy system and of the oversight both federally and provincially. But I'm disappointed to see that it doesn't include the rash of recommendations that flowed out of the social policy committee—a report this thick—where we spent a considerable amount of thoughtful time developing those recommendations. In fact, at the urging of our committee, Dr. Thiessen included a recommendation in his package of 12 because of the work that the committee was tasked to do.

The bill also extends oversight to the College of Pharmacists—because pharmacists in public hospitals and private hospitals didn't have any oversight. Of course, this became part of the problem in the chemo dilution piece: When you had a middleman out negotiating drug deals for you, it became problematic—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Ha—"drug deals."

Ms. Cindy Forster: Drug deals. I meant "chemotherapy drug deals." It became problematic, so it's good

to see that there's going to be some oversight on those pharmacists as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for York-Simcoe: You have two minutes.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like to thank those who offered their comments: the members for Oshawa, Halton, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and Welland.

I think that the people who are concerned about the notion of the purchase or sale—I find it hard to imagine that it's somehow okay if we buy it from another country, but it's not okay if we were to pay someone in this province to make a donation. I fail to see why one is okay and the other isn't, because the reality is that there's a gap. The gap is only going to be filled if new sources are found, and it seems that purchasing is the kind of thing that's done, and it has been done for quite a long time. Clearly, one of the ideas that was mentioned was the importance of getting the opportunity to hear people like the College of Physicians and Surgeons and others—their concern about this program as well.

The member from Welland dealt with the other half of the bill, in terms of the chemotherapy. The chemotherapy part is a demonstration of the fact that oversight, regardless of whether we're talking about blood and plasma products or we're talking about chemotherapy—we're dealing with medicine and medical procedures, whether they're life-threatening or not.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): In the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Despite the fact that all members present this afternoon will be deeply disappointed, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1658.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Second reading agreed to	1348
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Second reading agreed to	1348
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Second reading agreed to	1348
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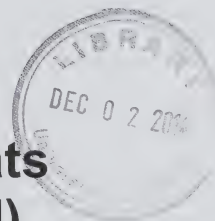
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**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**



Monday 24 November 2014

Lundi 24 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 novembre 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome Dale Downey, who is in the members' gallery. Dale is a guest of Frank Klees; we all know Frank Klees. Speaker, I know you'll more formally introduce the member, but I want to say that we miss him dearly here in the House, as I'm sure the government does, especially during question period. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'll notice I let that one slide just a little.

Introduction of guests?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome David and Barb Glazer to Queen's Park today. They bid on having lunch with me and they dropped a lot of money, so be nice to them.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce members from REALpac, the Real Property Association of Canada: Michael Brooks, CEO; Brooks Barnett, manager of government relations and policy; Carolyn Lane, VP, membership, marketing and communications; Nancy Anderson, VP, financial reporting, and CFO; Edward Byers, management, professional development and events; and Kailyn Perchalski, marketing and communications coordinator. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to welcome to the House students from the McMaster University PC campus association: Michael Klimuntowski, Jacob Klugsberg and Devin Marshal. Welcome.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce some members from Campaign 2000, child poverty activists who are in the gallery today: Anita Khanna, Laurel Rothman, Valerie Delgado, Lubna Khalid, Sadia Khan and Martha Friendly. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'd like all members of the Legislature to welcome my big sister, Susan Houghton, who is here to watch democracy in action. Welcome, Susan.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Today, page Kelsey Clark is page captain and her family is here to watch her in action. We have with us mother Cheryl Clark, father Matthew Clark, brother Jacob Clark, sister Mackenzie Clark, and Conrad Shank. They're here in the gallery with us today.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to welcome Anna Vozza, Julie Green, Krista Del Gatto, Cameron Paine, Phil Dornier and Bill Courtney. They are visiting me today from the Windsor-Essex County Association of Realtors.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome, in the east members' gallery, Leona Alleslev. Leona is a good friend and a constituent of mine, and was recently nominated to be a candidate in the next federal election.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to introduce representatives from Huron Perth Association of Realtors: Michael McIntee, Linda Bowers, Sue Fowler and Gwen Kirkpatrick.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Speaker, please help me welcome Kathleen Webb and Andrew Light to the chamber this morning. They are visiting the Legislature in support of Mineola Public School.

Kathleen Webb and Andrew Light are from CRS Technology, a start-up-business based in Mississauga working collaboratively with OCAD University and the region of Peel to develop a technology platform focused on job creation and employment. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce Michael McIntee, also from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and Dawn-Lee McKenzie from the Ontario association of realtors. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want those present to welcome Dr. Patrick Deane, the president of McMaster University, and Mary Williams, for coming in this morning from McMaster University. There's a reception this afternoon.

While I'm on my feet, I just want to say congratulations to the McMaster Marauders, who will play in the Vanier Cup, and to the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, who will be playing in the Grey Cup.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that we have a few representatives from the Canadian Diabetes Association in the chamber with us today. I would like to introduce Anne Le Quang, who is senior manager of programs and partnerships for Ontario; as well as Margaret Maheandiran and Soumia Djirar, volunteer advocates.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming members of OREA from my riding of Brampton who are here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the tradition of the Speaker, we have with us today in the west members' gallery, from Oak Ridges in the 37th and 38th Parliaments and Newmarket-Aurora in the 39th and 40th Parliaments, Mr. Frank Klees. We're glad you're with us today, Frank.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I ask the member to notice that I did that without editorial.

Also, in the Speaker's gallery today we have a very special guest delegation. It's a parliamentary delegation from the Gauteng Provincial Legislature of the Republic of South Africa. Please welcome our guests from South Africa.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll be teaching them about question period.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR SUDBURY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Joe Cimino as the member for the electoral district of Sudbury, effective the 20th day of November, 2014.

Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Minister, when I asked the Premier whether your government was intending on introducing a carbon tax like they have in Quebec, I really didn't get an answer last Thursday. She skated all over the place; she was as slippery as the ice outside.

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Let me just tell you what's going on in Quebec. Starting on January 1, 2015, a little over a month from now, drivers in Quebec will pay an extra 1.9 cents on each litre of gasoline for their carbon tax—a brand new tax. That's with carbon currently priced at \$11.39 per tonne. Drivers will pay two and a half cents more per litre of gas if carbon goes up to \$15, six cents more per litre if carbon goes up to \$30 per tonne and 10 cents more per litre if carbon goes up to \$50 per tonne, which it very well could. The carbon tax will also apply to natural gas and oil as well.

Minister, are you planning on doing the same thing to hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The first thing we have to understand is, our planet right now is heading for a four-degrees Celsius mean temperature change in the last half of this century. What that means for my four-year-old grandson: The chance of him growing up, getting to my age and having a functional economy or having a secure food supply is remote.

We're in three years of drought in California, which is going to drive food prices through the roof for working Ontario families. As you may know, as a result of climate change, Tim Hortons just raised its coffee prices 10 cents

a cup. Climate change is making the world a more dangerous and expensive place, and we are still waiting for the opposition to explain what their policy on climate change is.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I suspect this is more of a tax grab than it is a move to save the environment and save the climate.

In fact, in Quebec, the carbon tax that will come in just over a month will bring in \$500 million in the first year alone—2015. By 2020, it's expected to bring in \$3.5 billion in extra taxes. The \$500 million is exactly what we found out you were short in this year's fall economic statement. Everything points to—including the meetings and the deals that were signed on Friday between Premier Couillard and Premier Wynne—the fact that you're going after a tax grab. Do you really think that two cents a litre on gasoline is going to save the climate? I think what it's going to do is drive jobs out of the economy. It's going to, once again, overtax the people of Ontario, and it's penalizing hard-working Ontario families. That's what it's going to do.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First of all, the only carbon tax in Canada is in British Columbia. Second of all, Alberta's Conservative Party introduced a credit—a cap-and-trade system—similar to what Quebec and many other jurisdictions have.

I would suggest that the honourable member start to understand the difference between a market mechanism that helps companies pool capital and get rewarded for reducing their carbon emissions and improving their productivity and that of a tax. It's clear very to me that the literacy level about fiscal policy and the environment is about zero.

I spent two days with Resolute Forest Products going from where they cut down the tree to talking about how they're operating in the Quebec system. Some companies like it; some don't. But it's very clear that the opposition has not even a nodding acquaintance with either climate change or the market mechanisms available in some jurisdictions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, back to the minister: I'd say to the minister—rather than lecturing us, why don't you look in the mirror and test yourself for honesty? You didn't run on the carbon tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw, please.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But it's a Liberal virtue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member from Timmins–James Bay to resist the temptation.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, there was no mention of a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system in your last election or the Liberal platform. There was none in the throne speech or the budget or the fall economic statement. This thing has come clearly out of left field.

First of all, apologize to the people of Ontario for even thinking of this and, secondly, tell us today that you're not going to do it.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: When government announces policy, we do it through budgets, fall economic statements and legislation in this House. Considering that there is no legislation, as the member described, tells you it isn't coming out of left field; this is craziness coming out of right field.

Again, I've suggested in a few cases that \$700 million in one hour was the cost to GO of a washout in Burlington of eight metres of track.

Do you know how many hundreds of millions of dollars it has cost us to replace the operating rooms not once but twice in the last 24 months at Burlington hospital? Do you want to talk to Mayor Goldring about the impacts of climate change on his storm water system?

Mr. Grant Crack: What about Buffalo?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Would you like to go to Buffalo and try to explain unprecedented water—maybe you would like to talk to the people in Toledo, 400,000—

Mr. John Yakabuski: If you're going to make this stuff up, at least be credible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

New question.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, by now, everyone knows you tried to sneak half a billion dollars in cuts to the education system past Ontarians, but what we don't know is which schools you will close to make those cuts. There are over 150 accommodation reviews currently under way. You repeatedly mention 600 schools that are close to empty across the province, most of them in rural and small-town Ontario. You have said, "It's not prudent fiscal management to keep turning on lights and heating for schools that are not operating at capacity." Well, Minister, are you going to turn the lights off and the heating off in those 600 schools?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I caught a whiff of trying to hide things there. First, in response, I want to read you what the Auditor General said—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont, come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Liz Sandals: What the Auditor General said last week was that they had "a request by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts"—

Mr. John Yakabuski: There's a stench of trying to hide things over there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke come to order, second time.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —"to look at whether the government's communication of a \$2-billion savings, associated

with the negotiations with school board employees collective agreements, was reasonable." I'm quoting the auditor: "As you saw in our press release and from our report, we have concluded that the estimate was reasonable."

Quite frankly, everything we did during those negotiations was accurate—what we reported to the public—and totally transparent.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, I'm not really calling into question the work of the auditor. I'm calling into question the sneakiness of this government by cutting half a billion dollars from school boards, saying in the past that it was always up to school boards to make decisions whether schools stayed open or closed. But you are basically closing up to 600 schools across this province, and you won't be forthright and open about it. You talk about open government.

Now, you know the 600 schools. We want to see the list and we want to know, for the sake of our small towns, our rural Ontario and our cities: Which schools are you going to close? Which schools are you going to force school boards to close, by depriving them of \$500 million because of your fiscal mismanagement for the last 11 years?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm really not sure where it is that you decide something is sneaky when you send a consultation document to all 72 school boards in the province. That's not sneaky; that's open and transparent.

But to respond to the question, Speaker: We have provided \$22.5 billion in operating funding to school boards this year. That's up 56.5% since 2003. That's an increase of over \$4,200 for each and every student in the province of Ontario. We have dramatically increased funding. But it is also true that enrolment is declining, and boards need to manage their assets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Let me get this straight: You're still saying that boards need to manage their assets, but you're taking \$500 million—half a billion dollars—away from those very school boards. You're talking in this House, and you're talking outside, about low birth rates, close to 600 schools not at full capacity—they're less than 66%. You've talked about a secret list that you have that you won't show us. I would think that the school boards are getting the hint, pretty loud and clear, that they have to close schools.

Now, why don't you fess up to the fact and take the responsibility that you're forcing these schools to close, many of these schools—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Glengarry, come to order.

1050

Mr. Jim Wilson: I thought you would at least say it's something about hubs because you have talked about community hubs, but it sounds like you've even moved away from that.

What schools are you going to close, Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, I have significant funding in my budget to address community hubs. We're currently working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to figure out just exactly what we need to do with school hubs and a number of issues.

To go back to the question at hand: Of course we need to talk to boards about appropriate savings. This isn't about cuts; this is making sure, in a context of having a lot of underutilized capacity, that the boards review their assets carefully.

I think it's important to note, Speaker, that we have actually provided additional funding this year for rural and remote schools. In those cases where you've got a rural or remote northern school that clearly has to remain open, we've actually provided additional funding in those circumstances.

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. On November 24, 1989, the leader of the federal NDP rose in the House of Commons to propose that child poverty be eliminated within 10 years. Today, 25 years later, since that historic NDP motion, a staggering number of children—over half a million—are living in poverty in Ontario. That's more than the population of Hamilton. It's enough to fill the Rogers Centre 10 times over.

To the Acting Premier: After a decade of Liberal government, why are half a million children living in poverty in Ontario right here, right now?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Child poverty is of concern for us all. Mind you, we've made investments; we recognize how important it is. That's why, since we've invested over \$1 billion, we recognize that more needs to be done, and it will be critical for us to do so. But I want to comment on the question—from the third party, no less. The NDP's platform didn't even mention it once. Poverty was non-existent. They voted against the very measures that were progressive in this budget, dealing with poverty. They voted against the increase for families. They voted against investments in housing and benefits for low incomes. They voted against higher minimum wage, and now they have the audacity to stand here and ask us questions about something that they didn't even support.

I'll leave the supplementary to my colleague, who will address the very nature of what we're putting forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: In 2008, the Liberal government promised to reduce child poverty by 25%. The Deputy Premier called it "achievable." But the Liberals failed to keep that promise to the most vulnerable kids in our province. Instead of reducing child poverty, it's actually on the rise: 10,000 more children fell into poverty in just the last two years alone in Toronto.

If the Liberals promised to break the cycle of child poverty, why is it getting worse?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, I want to thank Campaign 2000 for their thoughtful report that was recently released. I think we all agree, Speaker, that to address poverty and help everybody reach their full potential, we need to make sure that the right supports are in place. We have recommitted to reducing poverty among children and youth through targeted investments and supports, reducing child poverty by 25% so everyone can get the best start in life and reach success. We'll be investing \$15 billion in funding for children's social services and more than \$1 billion in the Ontario Child Benefit—I may add, with no help from the NDP—and indexing that to inflation, which happened with our budget, as said by the Acting Premier. There is nothing in the NDP platform about poverty. But we are committed to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, focusing on the welfare of children, housing and other important measures.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: In her maiden speech to this House, the Premier said, "I've never known poverty." Speaker, every child in this province and this country should be able to say the exact same thing, but today, one in five kids in our province—half a million—are living in poverty. The Liberal government has failed to reach its poverty reduction target, and child poverty is actually increasing right here in Toronto.

After a decade of Liberal government, why do half a million kids in Ontario still know all too well the pain and suffering of poverty and what it means to live in poverty here in Ontario?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, there's no doubt there is much more work to do on this file, but we need to keep working and investing to break the cycle of poverty.

We have increased the benefit for the Ontario Child Benefit and indexed that to inflation, as I mentioned. This benefit, Speaker, has more than doubled—the child benefit has doubled—since 2008. That's fantastic.

We have other programs, such as our Student Nutrition Program. The Minister of Education and I were out recently supporting initiatives on that to help school-aged children get a good breakfast and start their days successfully. We've invested many more millions of dollars and will continue to do that as part of our five-year plan to expand student nutrition and other programs.

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Cindy Forster: You can't spin the lived experience of children in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who is the question for?

Ms. Cindy Forster: My next question is to the Deputy Premier. To more than half a million children living in poverty, the Liberal promises aren't worth much. The Liberals promised to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years. Those five years came and went; that promise was broken.

Now, the Liberals say they'll keep their word, but there's no target and no time limit. The Liberals have come up with a plastic promise they can't break and which they will never keep.

To the Acting Premier: Why does the Liberal government have no deadline for reducing child poverty and no urgency to get this job done?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I just want to make it perfectly clear that this is a very serious and important issue to our government. There is no doubt about that.

Let's focus on the facts. Our Poverty Reduction Strategy has many components, Speaker. I mentioned about the homelessness focus. We are committing to our original goal to reduce poverty by 25%, using 2008 as the base year; increasing the funding to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative by \$42 million; allocating \$16 million over three years to create 1,000 new supportive housing spaces; committing—this is very important—to providing health benefits for children and youth in low-income families, such as prescription drugs, vision care and mental health services; and investing \$50 million over five years. The strategy is very important.

The Deputy Premier has spoken before about the challenges we've faced in moving this strategy forward, including the lack of co-operation from the federal government and the realities of a recession we've lived in.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Campaign 2000 says that "austerity has eroded the living conditions of children and their families," but the Liberals are moving full steam ahead with an austerity plan that will only make life harder. It will slash 6% from most ministries in what Bloomberg calls the "biggest ... cuts since Harris." It means that half a million dollars will be cut from our schools, hurting the most vulnerable kids the most.

How can the Liberals say they're committed to addressing child poverty when their cuts are only making the problems worse?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, quite frankly, this is outrageous. The NDP did not even mention the word "poverty" in their platform—did not even mention it. They voted against the most progressive budget in Ontario's history.

This is what they said no to, Speaker: They said no to an increase to families who depend on the Ontario Child Benefit. They said no to investments in housing and benefits for low-income children. They said no to a higher minimum wage, and much, much more.

The PCs didn't help either. They wanted to slash social services.

There's no doubt that this government has moved on poverty reduction in Ontario. We've made investments, Speaker. There's more to do. We are deeply committed. This is a very serious issue. I'm very disappointed to hear the language being used by the NDP. We should be working together to reduce child poverty in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Cindy Forster: There are more children living in poverty than there are people living in Hamilton or Niagara, and that is a shameful record from a government that has made so many promises. It's a human deficit that will only hurt the province. Worst of all, the deep cutbacks will put more kids in poverty and make life harder for families already struggling to make ends meet.

Will the Acting Premier admit that the Liberals have no targets, no timeline, for reducing child poverty because they know that their cuts will only make the problems worse?

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Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm not sure what part of my answer wasn't heard. We are recommitting to our original target to reduce child poverty by 25%. We are increasing funding in the community homelessness initiative by \$42 million for nearly a total of \$294 million per year. We're allocating \$16 million over three years to create 1,000 new supportive housing spaces. We're very much focusing on supporting Ontarians living with mental health and addiction issues.

I don't know what else I can say, except that we want to keep going. We want to continue to lift children out of poverty. We will stand behind children and their families to help them reach their full potential. We'll keep making the investments we need. I surely hope the opposition party will be with us and reach that goal with us, together.

POVERTY

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Acting Premier: Minister, your government has released a new Poverty Reduction Strategy after missing most of the targets in your last one. You keep putting obstacles in front of Ontarians struggling to do better by depriving working parents of affordable, local, trusted child care, by making it more difficult to get training and to enter a trade, and by driving up hydro bills, pushing more Ontarians into poverty.

According to Campaign 2000's latest report card: "Income supports that are directly intended for children continue to be deducted from social assistance incomes, leaving families no further ahead." Minister, when will your cabinet stop giving with one hand and taking away with the other?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'll take the first question. I do appreciate and thank Campaign 2000 for their very thoughtful and constructive report. We all agree that child poverty is an issue. We need to address it. We are recommitting our efforts to doing so. We've put it in the budget. We reinforced it in the fall economic statement.

To have this question now come from the PCs is bizarre. They promote and they campaign on slashing social services to the most vulnerable people in our society. They voted against the Ontario Child Benefit. They voted against minimum wage increase. They voted for tax cuts for low income, and they—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order. The member from

Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order. The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order—and I have a few others in my head. Thank you.

Wrap up.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We all want to break that cycle of poverty. We want to ensure that we invest in social housing, which they also voted against.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the Acting Premier: Many agencies and community groups who assist needy Ontarians reached out to me recently, highlighting how their funding had not seen any increases for over five years and that their clients are struggling to access services in rural Ontario, pay their hydro bills, find good affordable housing and get training when they don't qualify for funding.

More Ontarians would be in full-time work, if businesses weren't being driven away. Housing would be more affordable, if Ontarians could afford winter heat. More families would boost their incomes, if they could access affordable local child care. Why does this government insist on making the poor poorer and feeding them with empty promises?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I hope the PCs agree that poverty is a complex issue. We have, of course, limited resources, so we have to make the best investments possible. That's what our reduction strategy is all about: getting the best possible results for people who are in poverty. We want to lift people out of poverty.

But I guess I'm glad that the PCs have asked this question, because after the election this year, I stood and announced the increase to the Ontario Child Benefit; we passed that by regulation. But guess what, Speaker? The indexing to inflation was tied to the budget, and they were nowhere to be found. They were nowhere to be found. Let's look at past records: The PCs slashed social assistance payments by 22% when they were in power, froze ODSP payments for the minimum wage for nine years and ended construction—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Thousands of people were on the front lawn of Queen's Park on Friday to demand an end to the cuts and privatization schemes that are eroding our public health care system under this Liberal government.

Just a day earlier, Health Quality Ontario revealed that when it comes to seeing a physician when we get sick, Ontario has the worst performance of all 10 countries that they compared to, including Britain and the US. Two thirds of patients with mental illness never get their one-week follow-up after a hospitalization, and the most frail seniors in our province wait an average of 111 days for the long-term care they need.

How can the Minister of Health defend his government's cuts and privatization of health care when Ontarians deserve so much better?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm not exactly sure which question you're asking, member from the third party. It was a pretty broad statement that was made.

I'm going to start with the demonstration on the front lawn of the Legislature on Friday, organized primarily by the Ontario Health Coalition. I was in a joint cabinet meeting with the Quebec cabinet and I had actually looked forward to meeting with the individuals on the front lawn. Unfortunately, when I returned from that cabinet meeting, they were no longer present. But I want to reassure Ontarians that, in fact, as we continue this process of moving certain low-risk procedures into the community closer to home where people want them, we do that in a manner which is safe and accountable and transparent. We only do it into organizations that are not-for-profit entities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: At the heart of our public health care system is the belief that high-quality care will be there for us when we need it. But too many Ontarians are waiting for months on end for the care they need, and sometimes not getting it at all. And this government's prescription is a freeze on hospital funding, privatizations of our health care services and massive cuts to home care in areas like Windsor. The minister tries to deny the reality, but patients are feeling the pain.

My question is simple: When will the minister get the message and stop the cuts and the privatizations that are undermining patient care in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: What the member opposite is saying is just not true. We have approximately doubled the funding to our hospitals across this province in the last 10 years.

The member opposite talked about cuts in Windsor. That's simply not true. In fact, we've nearly doubled the funding to our CCAC for home care in Windsor-Essex. In fact, we increased their funding by \$3 million this year compared to last year.

So it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we—all of us—are accountable for what we say and that we speak to the facts and we don't make things up as we go along. The important thing I'd like to leave with Ontarians is that we are investing in health care. We have one of the best health care systems in the world, Mr. Speaker. There is more work to be done, and we're making that work carefully in a calculated manner with our stakeholders in a way which is going to continue to improve the quality.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Climate change is one of the most important issues of our time, and governments, industry, communities and individuals must work together to solve this serious problem. I know that this is a significant issue for my con-

stituents in Halton. In fact, a survey of Halton region shows that close to 83% of residents are concerned about climate change. Halton residents want our government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Ontario reduces its greenhouse gas emissions.

I'm pleased to see that our government continues to take decisive action to address this serious challenge to our environment. It will help fight the severe weather that we've been facing recently. Taking these steps will also ensure that future generations will be able to breathe more easily and lead healthy lives tomorrow.

Can the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please update the House on what our government is doing with other jurisdictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We've done quite a lot. I've often given credit to my friend from St. Catharines. If you think about Ontario today, we have a blue box recycling program as a result of this government and his work. We have no more yellow hazy fogs over Toronto anymore because our coal plants are closed, Mr. Speaker.

Every time we went through those, folks opposite said that these kinds of environmental measures would cost people money and would produce doom and gloom and economic downturn. What we actually know is that Ontarians are very proud.

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We are a party with the courage to make tough decisions. But we're not alone, Mr. Speaker. We're working very closely with Quebec, which has taken some very important initiatives to capture the green economy and lower GHG emissions.

I'll look forward to continuing to answer in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Again, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

I'm pleased to hear that our government is working with other provinces to provide leadership on climate change where the federal government is actually failing to take meaningful action.

It's important that Ontarians come together to act on climate change now. It's vital that we recognize the unique opportunity our province has to become a global leader on this issue.

The Toronto Stock Exchange and the TSX Venture Exchange already include more clean technology and renewable companies than any other exchange in the world. I'm proud to say that a number of these forward-thinking environment companies are actually in my own riding. I'm sure my constituents will be happy to know that we're working with partners in other jurisdictions to combat climate change.

Mr. Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please share with the House what areas of action Ontario and Quebec will be taking on the memorandum of understanding?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: What we're doing with Quebec, California, New York and with the RGGI states,

which the opposition reads as taxes, is actually quite the opposite. What we're actually looking at is this: Will we buy electric, carbon-neutral cars made in Ontario and made in North America, or are we going to buy them solely from China?

If we do not have the partnerships with Quebec, California, New York and Michigan to create that green supply chain, to put the market mechanisms in place, to change our fiscal policies that companies like those in your constituency that want to innovate and go from a high-carbon, low-productivity economy to a low-carbon, high-productivity economy, we need to change the way we manage trade and fiscal policies and those kinds of outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, John Kerry, the Secretary of State, identified that while the tech boom was a \$1-trillion expansion of our economy, the low-carbon economy over the next 20 years will be a \$6-trillion expansion of the economy. We in Ontario are committed to lead that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, last week, motorists along the QEW got a glimpse of your vision for winter maintenance as they attempted to manoeuvre through slippery, snow-covered roads and multi-vehicle accidents. I'm sure many of them wondered where their government was to ensure road safety, and how it was that the Minister of Transportation was unprepared for a snowstorm everyone else saw coming.

I don't know if you get briefed on the weather, Minister, but given the direct relationship between foul weather and poor driving conditions, you may want to check into the new weather app at the BlackBerry store.

Minister, given that you were caught flat-footed last week, will you commit to the House today to keeping yourself apprised of the five-day weather forecast going forward?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for that question. Of course, as I've said many, many times in this Legislature, road safety and highway safety is one of the most important responsibilities that I have.

With respect specifically to winter maintenance, the fact that road safety is such a priority for us is one of the reasons that we have dedicated more resources this year to make sure that, right across the province of Ontario, we are in a position to respond to the weather as it occurs.

In fact, not that many weeks ago, as we have discussed here in the House, I was in a position to announce that we have added 50 new pieces of machinery to southern Ontario which, of course, complement the additional 55 pieces of equipment that we put on the roads, mostly in northern Ontario, last year.

We will continue to work very hard over the course of this winter season to make sure that we are equipped to

deal, and that we do deal, with winter maintenance conditions.

I look forward to the supplementary so that I can respond with more information.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the minister: Minister, we heard from you last week all about this review as to what happened last week. I don't know if that review is in yet, but I can tell you what it might look like. It will say three things:

(1) We live in Ontario, Canada, where it snows.

(2) It snowed.

(3) You failed to ensure you were prepared to clear that snow.

A couple of weeks ago, you boasted about \$15 million for winter maintenance. The thing is, only just over half of that went to the actual equipment, and the rest to bureaucrats and communication campaigns.

If last week proved anything, it's that we need plows and salters on our roads, not more bureaucracy. Of the \$8 million that was spent on equipment, Minister, can you tell us if those plows are actually operational today?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for the follow-up question. I said in my initial response that road safety is so important for us. It is why we have brought more resources to bear: to make sure we are equipped to deal with winter conditions.

There's one thing that I can suggest that the people of Ontario and that certainly the people of the Kitchener-Waterloo region don't want, which is that that member use sarcasm to try and make the point in this Legislature when we're dealing with an issue that's so important.

It's so important to make sure we are in a position to deal with winter conditions. It's why we're investing more resources—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have a right to hear the answer.

Please finish.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's one of the reasons that we have provided additional briefings for members of all three caucuses: to make sure that everyone is very well apprised of what we're doing this year to deal with the conditions. It's why we've added more equipment. It's why we've added more inspectors. I know that over the coming weeks and months, we will continue to do—from the ministry's perspective—the best we can to make sure our roads and highways remain, as they have been for the last 13 years, amongst the safest in North America.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Labour. A report to be released this afternoon shows that the WSIB is handing out huge safety rebates to companies that have been convicted of health and safety violations. Some of these violations have even resulted in workplace deaths. In many cases, the companies were fined for their violations, but the fines were nothing com-

pared to the generous WSIB rebates. The government has known about the problem with this program for many years, yet millions of dollars are still being sent to employers guilty of serious violations.

Will the government scrap the destructive experience rating program now?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I want to thank the member for this important question. It is a very important question. I want to start by saying that this is a conversation that's included in this report. At the foundation of this report is that people were killed on the job. We can't lose sight of that.

I want to thank Mr. Ryan, and I want to thank Ms. Hardwick of the OFL for the courtesy of some advanced knowledge of this report. It's something I take very, very seriously.

All three parties have used an experience rating. It was brought in in the 1980s. But what is important is that we do right by these families, by the families and survivors of people who have died on the job. There obviously are some existing problems with the current system, and that includes the experience rating system.

The WSIB has been acting already to improve the system. It made one change in 2008 that was implemented in 2009. We're in a period of consultation on this issue, and I urge the member to make sure he's involved in that consultation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, with due respect, there is nothing more to study. The respected Arthurs report, which was delivered to the government in early 2012, said that the government should scrap the program unless it could be proven that it was doing more good than harm. This is a program where a company like Triple M Metal, where a worker was killed in 2009 after he was trapped inside a metal shredder, was given more than \$926,000 in safety rebates in 2011-12. It's time to stop studying and start acting.

Will this government commit to ending this outrageous program now?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do want to thank the member for the supplementary. As I said, this is a very important issue, and we take it very, very seriously.

Under the policy that is in place now, if a company is responsible for a traumatic workplace fatality, it can't get a rebate in the year that that fatality occurred. Since 2009, \$11 million in rebates to employers have been cancelled as a result of that.

The WSIB knows there's more to do. It's in the process of making changes. Earlier this year, we released a report on the framework for the costs as we move ahead. It's focused on potential reforms to employer classifications, to rate-setting and to experience rating.

1120

We've completed one round of consultation—or the WSIB has. We'll be taking out further proposals for change. I look forward to seeing the results of that consultation. I want to hear from the OFL, I want to hear from employers in this regard and I want to hear from the opposition parties in this regard.

ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, in my constituency of Barrie there is a great representation from the members of the aboriginal community.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is responsible for providing culturally appropriate programs and services to aboriginal peoples. As you know, First Nations and Métis people seek services according to the needs of their community and delivered in their own communities. Minister, can you tell us what support the government and your ministry are providing to aboriginal peoples in need?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member from Barrie for that question. Supporting First Nations and Métis people in their communities is a very important priority for our government and for my ministry.

Last week I was in the great city of Thunder Bay celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, known as AHWS. In the early 1990s, we came together—government, First Nations, Métis and aboriginal leaders—to recognize and work together to address the concerns of aboriginal communities. With the partnership of the AHWS in 1994, we began funding organizations to address the high levels of family violence and poor health among Ontario's aboriginal people and communities.

Partnership and collaboration has led to the wide network of culturally appropriate programs and services that exist today. It has also created 650 jobs to deliver healing, health and wellness programs in 250 aboriginal communities and has established 460 community-based projects across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Minister. This government has made building supports for aboriginal peoples a priority. However, as we all know, there are many examples of First Nation communities facing crises of mental illness, addiction and suicide. Also, aboriginal women and girls are disproportionately victims of violence and poverty in Canada. This very important issue has been compounded by the fact that the federal government has been neglecting its responsibility to support this vulnerable population.

Last week we received disappointing news from Ottawa. It was reported that Status of Women Canada, the federal agency that is supposed to promote the equality and advancement of women, has funded 210 projects since the fall of 2011, and only 31 of them have had focus on aboriginal groups. That's just 14.8% of the agency's entire programming targeting this hugely vulnerable group. Minister, what is our government doing to assist these women and girls?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly, aboriginal peoples and communities do face unique challenges. There are high rates of violence against aboriginal women, substance abuse and youth suicides. That is why our govern-

ment, as announced last week, is investing more than \$10 million to help reduce family violence and violence against aboriginal women and children and to improve healing, health and wellness in aboriginal communities across Ontario.

A large part of the money, some \$8.6 million, will expand the reach of AHWS services to the growing aboriginal population and to hard-to-reach communities. Specifically, this will fund Talk4Healing, a phone help line for aboriginal women and girls in the north who have limited access to services.

I had the privilege of seeing the work being done there first-hand last week while in Thunder Bay. These investments affirm Ontario's ongoing commitment and support to the work of the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Minister of Education. Minister, your party's policy on student transportation is failing. It is failing to lower costs for school boards. The Ottawa student transportation alliance was whacked with a 17% increase in transportation costs this year by one of the consortiums approved by your RFP process. Independent operators received only a 2% increase.

Minister, the courts have ruled in favour of small, independent operators, like Montgomery, Richmond's, Foley and Boldrick in my riding, six times already, but you continue to drag out this process. Will you commit to suspending an RFP process that's only accomplishing two things: driving small businesses out of business and driving up costs for the local school boards?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think, first of all, that we do need to understand that the funding for transportation has increased quite significantly since 2003. We've actually increased the transportation funding by 40%, by over \$880 million. We do make allowances for things like increases in the cost of gasoline on a regular basis; that's part of my annual funding adjustment. The idea that somehow we have not increased the funding for transportation is just simply not accurate. We will continue doing that.

It is a requirement that every board, in procuring any service—whether it be busing or any other service—follow the broader public sector procurement guidelines.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Minister, you missed the premise of the entire question. You need to spend more on transportation because you're ending competition in the school bus sector right now. That's why you have to increase spending on transportation. We have small businesses that are going out of business in the province of Ontario because of your flawed RFP process. The courts have proven this six times, yet you continue to drag them through the mud and they continue to surround your office any time you appear with big yellow school buses.

For too long the RFP process has been costing jobs at small operators and now we find it's wreaking havoc

with the school boards as well. School boards that were part of the pilot RFP in 2010 in northern Ontario are now experiencing deficits and labour problems as they drive up the transportation costs there. Small operators who had been in business as a family, for generations, are out of business.

Minister, the process has proven to be a disaster. Will you commit to suspending the RFP while an independent, third party review is done—one that's not stacked against the independent school bus operators?

Hon. Liz Sandals: In fact, we did make a commitment during the campaign that we would conduct an independent review of competitive procurement. We have, in fact, set up the panel to do that. It is led by Mr. Justice Colin Campbell. I think any of you who know Mr. Campbell's reputation as an Ontario judge would agree that that is a third party, independent review when it's being led by Mr. Justice Colin Campbell. He has begun his work. He will be reporting back to me after consulting with the various stakeholders, the various bus operators—there's more than one association—the school boards, the consortiums. I look forward to receiving Mr. Justice Campbell's report.

HOUSING SECURITY FOR IMMIGRANTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, the most recent Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. report on housing trends lists my community of London as the second-hardest community for immigrants to find housing security in the country, second only to Toronto, even though Toronto's population is 90% larger than London's.

Much of this trend is due to the lack of affordability. However, we know the real issue at play is access for newcomers. Newly arrived individuals and families are finding it difficult to secure housing because of lease restrictions.

Immigrants are vital to the economic well-being and growth of our communities, especially in my riding of London. What is this government doing to ensure that newcomers in my community have the housing security they need?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I appreciate the question. There's no doubt at all that those immigrating to this province and this country have built this great province and this great country into what it is today, and that we need to do everything we can to assist everybody in Ontario to be adequately housed.

As the member may be interested in learning, I'm doing a building bridges tour. I'm touring and speaking to a number of groups concerned about housing options. We were up in Ottawa last week to talk to the Ottawa Non-Profit Housing Corp. We have a couple of housing groups coming in today. I'm meeting with groups concerned about immigrant housing and other housing. We hope to renew our long-term housing strategy in ways that will more effectively deal with the very kinds of concerns the honourable member has raised.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, especially in western Ontario, we need a diverse workforce in order to kick-start the economic engine. But it's not just in my community of London; immigrants in Toronto have it worse. Over 36% are unable to secure affordable housing. Right across the province, it's the same, in Windsor and Hamilton.

Speaker, what assurances will this government give us, the people of Ontario, that it will not just take this study that identifies a problem—it won't just be ignored. And what is this government going to do to find solutions for the housing insecurity that is faced by immigrants in Ontario?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, we're going to do anything and everything we can to address the housing challenges that we have in the province, Mr. Speaker. We have, actually. We have been meeting with groups. We're looking particularly at partnering with the private sector, which we think brings a lot of expertise to the table. We need to find some creative entrepreneurial ways of doing that. The investment in affordable housing program, which we're jointly engaged in with the feds, is helpful. There's an \$800-million allocation there. That's handled through municipal service partners, by the way, so that local municipalities can determine for themselves the best approach. We've also reinvested in the CHPI program, which, again, is managed by municipalities so as to reflect the local needs.

DIABETES

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. November is Diabetes Month in Canada. The Canadian Diabetes Association is a remarkable advocate for people with diabetes. I know we have many representatives here today in the gallery. Thank you to the volunteers and staff for all that you do.

As a nurse, I know that diabetes is a chronic disease that can cause serious complications if not managed properly. I provided care in and out of the hospital for many diabetics over my career. It's estimated there are nearly 1.4 million people in Ontario who have been diagnosed with diabetes. That's nearly 10% of the population. By 2020, it's estimated that the number of people living with diabetes will reach almost two million, with an estimated cost of \$7 billion to the health care system. Speaker, it concerns many of my former patients in Cambridge.

What is our government doing to help those with diabetes, Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to thank the member for Cambridge raising this very important question.

We've come a long way in diabetes prevention, treatment and management. I remember when my sister was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was in her teens, more than 40 years ago, and just the changes that have taken place in this province and around the world. It's something we can all be proud of.

Our government is committed to providing Ontarians who have diabetes with the information and supports that they need to manage their health effectively. I'm proud that, in fact, under our government, every single Ontarian with diabetes who wants a family doctor has one.

The best way to fight diabetes is to prevent it. That's why our government is moving forward to put in place recommendations from our Healthy Kids Panel to help us undertake the challenge of reducing childhood obesity, which contributes to chronic diseases like diabetes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: There are no known ways to prevent type 1 diabetes, but research shows that type 2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented through healthy eating, weight management and exercise.

Both types of diabetes can be managed to result in better health outcomes. One way is through the use of insulin pumps. A nursing colleague of mine was pleased that Ontario was the first province to fully fund insulin pumps for children and adults with type 1 diabetes. This saved her up to \$18,300 in the first five years, as her son was an insulin-dependent diabetic. So far, the program has provided more than 15,000 Ontarians—many my constituents, including seniors—with funding for the purchase of insulin pumps and related supplies.

Minister, what is Ontario doing to help those with complex needs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We know that the health needs of Ontarians with diabetes are often very complex and require multidisciplinary care, which is why we've established six different centres for complex diabetes care. These centres have provided care to more than 6,000 new patients.

We've increased the number of diabetes education teams to more than 300 around the province to help people manage their diabetes and their related complications. We've also invested in self-management, providing workshops to more than 14,000 individuals.

On the insulin pump, which is now provided, I'm proud to say that the member—

Interjection.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: He just reminded me—from Thunder Bay—Superior North introduced not one, but two private members' bills specifically speaking to that issue of the importance of providing those insulin pumps. It's a beautiful example of how technology has evolved, and the government, as a part of our responsibility to diabetes treatment and management, has responded as well.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, in July, I gave you a personal invitation to tour Kemptville college. Although you didn't have the courtesy to include me in your tour recently, at least you showed up and saw the facilities at that college—the facilities that I think are state-of-art for our agriculture students and also provide a

wonderful venue to host a number of community events. These events bring in critical revenue and let everyone know that Kemptville college is open for business, so you can appreciate my surprise when I found out last week that the University of Guelph has stopped allowing private bookings at the campus, effective November 30.

Minister, so many people, including your provincial facilitator, are working on a sustainable future for the college. Why are you allowing the University of Guelph to undermine those efforts?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to begin by thanking the member for that question.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting the officials of Kemptville college and also the leaders of the community, along with my colleague Minister Jeff Leal. We extended, actually, an invitation to the member to join us, but unfortunately his schedule didn't allow it.

It's very important for our government to make sure that our young people in eastern Ontario have access to quality agricultural education in this wonderful facility. We are working with the community leaders, as well as the institution itself, to make sure that Kemptville college will continue to provide educational services to young people in the eastern part of the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Minister, it's obvious that you don't know what's going on at that campus. I tried to send a booking for a meeting at that campus, and I know there are other groups that have tried to book meetings or events on that campus, and the university has said no. It's a pattern that began with the University of Guelph when they announced the closure in March. They timed it to ensure that we wouldn't get a new intake of students.

Minister, I believe Kemptville college has a bright future. If you agree, you'll get on the phone and tell the university to stop blocking the community from providing revenue at that facility. Guelph has done enough damage to this community. Will you join me in stepping in and stopping this right now?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it's very important for this government to make sure that our young people in eastern Ontario have access to a quality education in agriculture. Actually, when this issue came up, our government, through the ministry of agri-food, committed to a \$2-million investment to maintain the program continuing in Kemptville college.

As I said earlier, again, we had the honour and pleasure of meeting the officials of the college and also the leaders of the community last October to make sure that the college and those in the community find a solution to the issue that the college is facing in the local community. They're working very hard to make sure that this college will continue its operations with the assistance of the community leaders on the site.

Since we came to office, we have invested heavily in post-secondary education. Actually, we have increased funding by 83% for our young people to be able to study at our—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier.

Any real plan to address child poverty must address the problem of precarious work. When the federal government pledged to eradicate child poverty in 1989, 13% of the country had precarious employment. By 2007, the figure had ballooned to almost 21%. Currently in the GTA, precarious work has increased by almost 50% over the past two decades. Most of that growth has occurred under this government. This government must take precarious employment, particularly temporary work through temporary help agencies, seriously. Families are struggling to make ends meet. Children are living in poverty as a result of precarious employment.

Will this government commit to a real plan to address precarious employment? Will this government address this issue so that children will not live in poverty?

Hon. Charles Sousa: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I appreciate the question. I think it's something that concerns us all in the province of Ontario. I think we all know that the world of work has changed in this province. The Ministry of Labour works really hard to ensure that Ontarians are treated with the dignity and the respect they deserve at work.

We've just passed Bill 18, which speaks to an awful lot of the issues that the member has raised. The Employment Standards Act sets out payment of wages, minimum wage, overtime pay—all those things that treat employees the way that we would like to be treated as employees ourselves.

If the member has any issues or if he has any specific examples of where he feels the Employment Standards Act is being abridged, please call our office—urge his constituents to call our office—and we will act upon those concerns.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry on a point of order.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: During my question today, the member from Beaches—East York commented that they should have elected a Liberal. Will he—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. That's not a point of order.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Ms. Cindy Forster: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to correct my record. In my second question, I said, "half a million" in cuts; I really meant half a billion in cuts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. Any member can correct their record at any time.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to introduce a whole bunch of guests. But I had the privilege of being in the lobby this afternoon, and there are so many wonderful kids who are there who are bringing their talents to Queen's Park, and I just wanted to remind all members to take advantage of the opportunity of going out there and listening to these kids. They're wonderful. They're delightful angels, and they sing fantastically. So enjoy it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup. I will cheat a little bit and tell you that from here on until the break, we will be having a wonderful opportunity every noon hour to enjoy the work of many schools and individuals around the province. Thanks to the staff for coordinating that. I appreciate it. So get out and support it. That's my statement for the day.

Member from Dav—

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Davenport.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Davenport. I did say it. I had it.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: You did. Fantastic.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to welcome Ms. Morton's grade 5 class from Fairbank Memorial school, located in my riding of Davenport. I just had an opportunity to meet with them at the grand staircase. I know they're making their way up here, so I wanted to welcome them.

Miss Monique Taylor: Mr. Speaker, with the lack of introductions today, I thought I would steal just a quick moment to congratulate our Hamilton Tiger-Cats for winning the eastern final. We know they're going to do us so proud when we go to the Grey Cup on Sunday. Thanks for the moment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further discussion between the two members from Hamilton?

I, too, have an introduction. In the Speaker's gallery today we have some very special guests, and we're appreciative that they're here: Ms. Avis Gray, president, Association of Former Manitoba MLAs; Dr. Linda Asper, past president, Association of Former Manitoba MLAs; Mr. Clif Evans, secretary, Association of Former Manitoba MLAs; M^{me} Rita Dionne—Marsolais, chair, parliamentary democracy, former members from Quebec; and M^{me} Manon Voyer, secretary for the same association.

Also with us: Reverend Canon Derwyn Shea, present chair of the OAFP, former parliamentarians of Ontario; and Mr. Gilles Morin, vice-chair.

We're glad you're here. Welcome.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): They have plenty of wisdom to offer.

It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOWARD ROTHMAN

Mrs. Gila Martow: I rise today to recognize Howard Rothman. Last week when terrorists stormed Jerusalem's Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue, Toronto native Howard Rothman was deep in prayer. The horrific attack Tuesday morning left five people dead and at least another five injured. Howard is currently in a medically induced coma after receiving multiple blows to his neck, skull and arms. He has already undergone three surgeries and lost one eye.

Howard did not deserve this fate. I want to echo the sentiments of Canada's foreign affairs minister when he said, "Attacks on innocent worshippers, in what is supposed to be a place of peace and tranquility, are cowardly and must never be tolerated."

The Jewish community across the GTA and across the province has once again come together in solidarity in response to this most vicious attack. The UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has generously agreed to set up a fund for Howard, his wife, Risa, and their family.

Last night, I had the privilege of attending the Jewish National Fund Negev dinner. Proceeds from the 2014 Negev campaign will go directly towards building a new facility for the Herzog Hospital in Israel to treat post-traumatic stress disorders and mental health issues. These issues are all too prevalent in Israel as a result of living under constant threats of terrorism and barbarism, as displayed in attacks such as last Tuesday's.

I offer my deepest, heartfelt condolences to the families of all of the victims, and my prayers are with Howard and his family during this most difficult time.

STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On Friday, I was pleased to attend the launch of an exciting new smartphone app, Smart APPetite. The app was designed in London to encourage people to buy local, eat smart, and get healthy, improving community well-being and boosting southwestern Ontario's local food economy.

The app was developed under the leadership of Western University professor and London West constituent Dr. Jason Gilliland, working in collaboration with students, researchers and community partners. This is just the latest in an amazing lineup of community university research projects that Dr. Gilliland has led over the years, in the process providing paid employment for approximately 300 students, many of whom are undergrads.

Not only do Dr. Gilliland's students gain hands-on experience in data collection, data analysis and report-writing, but they also develop enduring relationships with vital community organizations, giving these talented young people a direct stake in the well-being of our community and the connections that will hopefully keep them in London when they graduate.

These are exactly the kinds of opportunities that would be expanded by my private member's bill, the Learning Through Workplace Experience Act.

I congratulate Dr. Gilliland on his commitment to enhancing his students' learning experience by providing valuable opportunities for paid employment on projects that address community needs.

HAZEL McCALLION CAMPUS,
SHERIDAN COLLEGE

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to share with this House that recently I had the opportunity to attend the phase 2 ground-breaking ceremony for the expansion of the Hazel McCallion Sheridan campus in Mississauga.

It was only in May 2009 that I had the privilege, on behalf of our government, to announce that there would be a new Sheridan campus in Mississauga. In September 2011, the campus became a reality. During the summer of 2011, again I had the privilege to announce that our government would invest an additional \$67.7 million for the phase 2 expansion of the campus, to be completed in the summer of 2016.

This expansion of Sheridan campus will mean greater access to post-secondary education, investment in our youth and enormous benefit to our community. Our government is making progress on the promises it made by investing in people's skills and talents. We stood by our commitment—promise made, promise kept.

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CALVIN NIGH

Mr. Tim Hudak: Winston Churchill once said that we make a living by what we get, but we make a life out of what we give. Calvin Nigh, teacher, football coach, in his far too short 48 years gave a lot. And what a life he lived. I grew up with Calvin. We had a one-year age difference. I played basketball against him, a guy you didn't mess with in the paint. He grabbed every rebound that was out there.

But he was a great football player, a linebacker you didn't mess with. He went on to be a defensive end and an all-star at the University of Guelph. The funny thing was, he went to Ridgeway high school but he played for the Fort Erie Falcons because Ridgeway hadn't had a team for about 30 years, since the mid-1970s. After he graduated and came back to Ridgeway high school, Calvin decided to bring football back to Ridgeway. He used that same defensive end tenacity to raise \$33,000 from donors and bring a team back to Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School.

The night he died, he actually had the team in for a bit of a pep rally as the big game came up against the Beamsville Bucs. Sadly, he passed away of a heart attack at 48. His team rallied the next day, beat the Beamsville Bucs and then went on a tear. They knocked off the South Lincoln Bears in the semi-final and then won the

championship over the tough Thorold Golden Eagles to win that title, the first title for Ridgeway since 1970.

I'm proud of Calvin. I'm proud of the Blue Devils and what they did. The coach, by the way, in 1970, of an undefeated Ridgeway Blue Devils team was Pat Hudak, my dad. I'm proud of that, too.

Calvin Nigh, a man who lived a great life, gave back to his community. He is sadly missed. A tragic story but a Hollywood ending. We're real proud of him.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and recognize the many people who have travelled to Queen's Park today to raise the plight of injured workers. New Democrats continue to raise alarm bells over the internal changes to WSIB benefits under this Liberal government. This is an all-out assault under the Liberal government on injured workers, and quite frankly, it's alarming. These are some of our province's most vulnerable citizens, and we need to support them. People are outraged to see continuous government mismanagement and scandals, and money flowing into the pockets of corporate CEOs, while injured workers continue to suffer.

I have met several times with members of the Manitoulin and North Shore Injured Workers Group—many times, Mr. Speaker. They wished to be here today, but unfortunately, due to financial constraints, it's very difficult for some of them to get here.

New Democrats continue to raise concerns. Sadly, our efforts continue to fall on deaf ears. Since 2009, when David Marshall became the head of WSIB, we have seen a drastic reduction of benefits for injured workers. While Marshall receives a 20% bonus on his \$400,000 salary, WSIB claims denial rates have shot up by 50%. This government needs to ensure that injured workers are not harmed further by these reckless policy changes, and New Democrats will continue to stand up for the rights of injured workers.

CANADIAN RED CROSS, BURLINGTON BRANCH

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm honoured to stand here today to recognize a significant milestone for the Burlington branch of the Canadian Red Cross. This past weekend, my colleague the member for Halton and I were able to celebrate 75 years of service with this outstanding organization. Not only do they provide a range of services to our local community of Burlington, but they also look outwards in international efforts for emergency relief operations.

Now, if we lived in a perfect world, we wouldn't need the support of an organization like the Red Cross. If we lived in a perfect world, families would not be without homes from floods or fires; seniors would not be isolated and confined to their homes. But the truth is, we live in the real world where it is inevitable that natural disasters,

accidents and conflicts do happen. This is a world where a CPR course or an abuse prevention program can help save lives, a world where transportation to a medical appointment or the delivery of a hot meal can change the day of a local senior for the better.

After witnessing the devastating impacts of the flood in Burlington this past August, it gives me great pride to reflect on the impactful work of the Burlington branch of the Canadian Red Cross. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the flood, people's lives were suddenly on their front lawns, and the Red Cross was there, going door to door, talking to victims of the flood, helping them with their concerns and measuring the flood's impact.

So it gives me great pleasure to thank and congratulate, for 75 years of service in making Burlington a wonderful place, all of the volunteers and staff.

WINTER DRIVING

Mr. John Yakabuski: My statement today is a request to the Minister of Transportation to assume my private member's bill, a bill I introduced last week, that would amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit driving a motor vehicle on a highway with a dangerous accumulation of snow or ice. I introduced this bill in the last Parliament, and as the Parliament expired and died, the bill died on the order paper as well.

As winter approaches, I want to remind people: For anybody who drove on the highways last winter, it would be rare if you didn't see at some point ice or snow flying off the roof of another vehicle on the highway. It was that kind of winter. We have no idea what kind of winter we're going to have ahead of us this year, but the same thing could happen.

What happened to a constituent in my riding, Mr. Gord Stickles, was alarming. A 53-foot-long sheet of ice up to five inches thick came off, in one motion, the roof of a tractor-trailer. He escaped injury and possibly death, but his vehicle was completely demolished.

We found out then that Ontario has no provision to provide for this in legislation. So we're asking for that. It will bring it in line with other jurisdictions such as Quebec, New Brunswick, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, all jurisdictions that, like us, have winter.

I'd ask the Minister of Transportation to take a look at this and bring this forth as a government bill. I'm sure that every member in this House would support it.

JEFF DORFMAN

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise today to pay tribute to Jeff Dorfman. Jeff Dorfman was the proprietor of Katz's Deli and Corned Beef Emporium. Jeff was an incredible volunteer who served in the Canadian militia with the Governor General's Horse Guards. He served there for 51 years. He was an honorary lieutenant-colonel. He helped guide the Royal Canadian Military Institute, just down the street. In fact, the Canadian military institute,

because of Jeff's work, is going to be made into a legacy project, ensuring the institute stays for another 100 years.

Jeff was an incredible businessman. He was a generous community volunteer. He loved Canada and that's why he served for 51 years with the militia and was always there to help everybody in the community. He will be missed by all. He was, as they say in Yiddish, a real mensch, a real man's man who was a man of his word and really typified what's great about a young Canadian who worked his whole life, never took anything from the government and always gave back.

We pay tribute to Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Dorfman. We're all going to miss Jeff, and so will his wife, Faye, his daughters, Ruth and Kate, and his son, Aubrey. To Jeff Dorfman: We're going to miss you, Jeff. You were a real friend and mensch for all of us.

AFRO-CARIBE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF KINGSTON

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Recently I was blessed to attend an inspirational event in my community, namely the Afro-Caribe Community Foundation of Kingston's annual awards and dinner-dance.

Each year the board, headed up by the irrepressible Judi Brown, raises funds to support two scholarships to Queen's University and to provide yearly awards to high school students who have shown academic excellence and who are also in financial need.

The outstanding student awards went to Maverick Blair of Frontenac Secondary School and to Anthony Donnet and Evrold Watts of QECVI—three wonderful young men that I had the pleasure of chatting with over dinner.

The scholarships are worthy of further note. The Robert Sutherland bursary commemorates Queen's University's first student of colour, who came to Queen's from Jamaica in 1849. His extraordinary academic achievements deserve more time, but amongst other things he is celebrated as Canada's first lawyer. He left his entire estate to Queen's, the largest donation they had ever received, at a time when Queen's was in poverty and about to be annexed by the University of Toronto.

Organizations such as this, of which there are many in my riding, take considerable pride in contributing to the multicultural vibrancy and quality of life in our community. I never cease to draw inspiration from the hard work of organizations and volunteers.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Davenport on a point of order.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As previously mentioned earlier, it gives me great pleasure to introduce and welcome Ms. Morton's grade 5 students from Fairbank Memorial public school in my riding of Davenport.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While that's not a point of order, it's always nice to see the people you actually introduce. So we're glad that they're here.

I'm going to take that advantage as well, before we move to the next routine proceeding: Two more former parliamentarians have showed up in the Speaker's gallery: Mr. David Warner, who was also a Speaker, and Mr. Steve Gilchrist. We're glad you're here with us this afternoon.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 POUR DES CHOIX PLUS SAINS

Ms. Damerla moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / *Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2014 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The associate minister for a short statement.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: The bill I am moving today includes three pieces of proposed legislation:

First, this legislation would, if passed, require food service premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario to include information about calories on their menu.

The second part of this proposed legislation would, if passed, prohibit flavoured tobacco products from being sold in Ontario.

These first two pieces are very similar to proposed legislation brought forward by the government in the previous session.

Finally, the bill proposes to regulate electronic cigarettes in Ontario, similar to tobacco cigarettes.

I will be pleased to make further comments on this proposed legislation in a minister's statement tomorrow afternoon.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (OFF-ROAD VEHICLES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (VÉHICULES TOUT TERRAIN)

Mr. Vanthof moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of off-road vehicles / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les véhicules tout terrain.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. John Vanthof: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. Currently, the regulations under the act restrict the operation of off-road vehicles on highways to vehicles that are designed to carry only a driver and no passengers. The bill amends the act to prevent regulations made under the act from restricting permission to operate off-road vehicles on highways to vehicles that are designed to carry only a driver and no passengers. Basically what this bill does is give UTVs the same rights as ATVs.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98 (g), notice for ballot items number 19, 22 and 23 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Gravelle moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items number 19, 22, and 23 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated November 18, 2014, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to eight days between January 19 and January 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Gravelle moves that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated November 18, 2014, the Standing Committee on Finance

and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to eight days between January 19 and January 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Moiz.

STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: "Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas research suggests that work experience is a crucial factor in ensuring positive labour market outcomes for post-secondary students; and

"Whereas many post-secondary students are unable to gain relevant work experience, or participate in work experiences that do not effectively integrate with their academic program of study; and

"Whereas a 2013 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recommended that Ontario make much greater use of innovative work-integrated learning programs to combat youth unemployment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(1) bring together students, post-secondary institutions and employers in a provincial advisory council on work-integrated learning, mandated to make recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on various issues including:

“(a) how to engage more employers in providing paid work-integrated learning (WIL), and to improve regulation of unpaid WIL;

“(b) how to support post-secondary institutions in delivering quality WIL experiences for students;

“(c) how to ensure that all qualified students who are interested in participating in WIL are able to participate across different faculties and fields of study.”

I affix my name to the petition, fully support it and give it to page Ella to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

“Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

“Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

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“Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario’s health care sector;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman.”

Mr. Speaker, I support the petition. I will give my petition to Jenny. Thank you.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Harris: I’ve got a good one here. It’s to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the Liberal government has proposed a 148% increase in the province’s aviation fuel tax over the next four years; and

“Whereas the tax increase will mean the average family can pay an estimated extra \$50 to \$200 for a flight on top of their tickets; and

“Whereas the massive tax increase: (1) punishes consumers and communities; (2) makes Ontario a less attractive destination to invest and expand into; and (3) compounds an already large competitiveness gap with neighbouring US airports; and

“Whereas the flight tax increase flies in the face of a Liberal election promise of no tax increases on the middle class; and

“Whereas the proposed tax increase will drive away over 400,000 air travellers out of Ontario when three million Ontarians are already crossing the border annually to fly from US airports; and

“Whereas this tax increase will impact many industries across Ontario including manufacturers, freight and tourism, including hotels, restaurants, travel agents and tour operators, among others who support the tourism industry; and

“Whereas British Columbia, New Brunswick, Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan have eliminated international flight fuel taxes, while Ontario’s rate is set to become one of the highest fuel taxes in the world; and

“Whereas Dr. Fred Lazar of the Schulich School of Business indicates in his study that this tax increase will cost the province up to 2,907 full-time jobs and decrease provincial GDP by up to \$97 million annually;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Ground the flight tax increases pending meaningful consultation and a full study of their adverse economic impacts before it’s too late to reverse the damage to Ontario’s economy.”

Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I’m going to sign it and send it down with page Kelsey.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

“Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

“Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

“Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding.”

I fully support this. I will affix my signature to it and give it to Haniah to bring to the Clerk’s desk.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It’s been sent to me by a number of folks from Erin Mills, and I’d like to read it. It read as follows:

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

Speaker, I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it along with page Claudia.

CHELTENHAM BADLANDS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) holds title to the Cheltenham Badlands, and the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) has management responsibilities for the site under an agreement with the OHT; and

"Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential for successful development of the Cheltenham Badlands and surrounding areas; and

"Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about the Cheltenham Badlands and related projects in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government fully fund the Cheltenham Badlands management plan which includes but is not limited to the fencing of the geological feature; viewing platforms; boardwalks; perimeter fencing(s); trail maintenance and other accessory requirements as part of a complete and approved management plan."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Nick to take to the table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as 'delivery fees';

"Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the 'delivery fees' looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop Algoma Power's influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Albany to bring it to the table.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Miss Monique Taylor: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I fully support this. I'm going to affix my name to it, and I'm going to give it to page Vida to bring to the Clerk.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario's automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

"Whereas the stringent application of emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

"Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

"Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old vehicles by

amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support, and I'll send it to the table with page Kate.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: These petitions keep coming in; they don't stop. These are many petitions from the Marathon area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

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“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Ethan to bring it down to the Clerk.

TAXATION

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government has proposed a 148% increase in the province's aviation fuel tax over the next four years; and

“Whereas the tax increase will mean the average family can pay an estimated extra \$50 to \$200 for a flight on top of their tickets; and

“Whereas the massive tax increase: (1) punishes consumers and communities; (2) makes Ontario a less attractive destination to invest and expand into; and (3) compounds an already large competitiveness gap with neighbouring US airports; and

“Whereas the flight tax increase flies in the face of a Liberal election promise of no tax increases on the middle class; and

“Whereas the proposed tax increase will drive away over 400,000 air travellers out of Ontario when three million Ontarians are already crossing the border annually to fly from US airports; and

“Whereas this tax increase will impact many industries across Ontario including manufacturers, freight and tourism, including hotels, restaurants, travel agents and

tour operators, among others who support the tourism industry; and

“Whereas, according to the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association, the increase will effectively squeeze the personal aviation and flight training sector, decreasing activity and curtailing jobs such as aircraft repair and servicing, and flight training; and

“Whereas British Columbia, New Brunswick, Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan have eliminated international flight fuel taxes, while Ontario's rate is set to become one of the highest fuel taxes in the world; and

“Whereas Dr. Fred Lazar of the Schulich School of Business indicates in his study that this tax increase will cost the province up to 2,907 full-time jobs and decrease provincial GDP by up to \$97 million annually;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Ground the flight tax increases pending meaningful consultation and a full study of their adverse economic impacts before it's too late to reverse the damage to Ontario's economy.”

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with page Jenny.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mr. Ron Viau from my riding in Hanmer, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013...;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity”—such as my own;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Albany to bring it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think this might be the longest run-on sentence ever spoken.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 47, and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014, and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, December 1, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, December 2, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 21:

- notice of public hearings on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire;

- witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis;

- each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

- the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the second day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Wednesday, December 3, 2014.

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, December 4, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Thursday, December 4, 2014, at 2 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, December 8, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading

stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Matthews has moved government notice of motion number 9. Shall I read it again?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Debate? Who's leading off the debate?

I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this important debate, and I look forward to hearing from my honourable colleagues from all parties. I think we can all agree that the health and well-being of Ontarians is a top priority for all members in this Legislature. Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, is a combination of two time-sensitive bills that were previously introduced in the last Parliament.

The first bill, Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, was introduced more than a year ago and was debated for many months in the House. The second bill, Voluntary Blood Donations Act, was first introduced nine months ago and was debated and referred to committee with agreement from all parties. Both bills died on the order paper last May. Both bills were also part of the Liberal plan that we put to the people in June. We are following through with that mandate.

We're now moving forward with Bill 21. This motion allows the House to pass this bill before the new year.

Schedule 1 of the bill would prohibit paying or accepting payment for blood and plasma donations in Ontario. If passed, this bill would help preserve the integrity of the voluntary blood and plasma donation system we have in Ontario.

Following the tainted blood scandal of the 1980s, Canada's blood system was established on the principle of voluntary donation. However, as is public knowledge, there have been cases in Ontario of clinics that intend to pay individuals for their plasma donations. We've heard from many health care organizations and individual Ontarians, including victims of tainted blood, who oppose private, for-profit plasma clinics.

With these types of private clinics, the principle of voluntary donation is at risk. As a government, we stand firmly against payment for blood or plasma donations in Ontario, and that is why we need to pass this legislation as quickly as possible.

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Schedule 2 of the bill focuses on the regulation of hospital pharmacies, specifically Ontario's cancer drug supply system. When it came to light that 1,019 patients received weaker doses of chemotherapy drugs than had

been prescribed by their oncologists, our government appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to conduct an investigation to determine the cause of the underdosing. His investigation yielded 12 recommendations to protect public safety, and our government is committed to implementing them.

One of the recommendations requires legislative changes, which this proposed legislation addresses. Our proposed legislation would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act so that the Ontario College of Pharmacists can inspect and license all hospital pharmacies operating in Ontario. This is a means to ensure that medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies are standardized.

Speaker, we know that there is support from members from all parties. In fact, members from both opposition parties have made positive comments in support of this bill. I'm very pleased about that.

The member from Nickel Belt, the health critic for the NDP, agrees that there is an urgency to passing this legislation. Here's what she said: "We have a bill in front of us. I hope it will go to committee as fast as we can send it there."

"Let's move on with it. It has been two years. This is way too long."

I couldn't agree more.

The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has said, "My PC caucus colleagues, including our health critic, Christine Elliott from Whitby-Oshawa, are supportive ... but we do want to make sure that it gets to committee."

Again, I couldn't agree more. This is a very special moment in this Legislature, Speaker: We all agree.

There's also support for this bill from those who matter the most. Antonia Swann is the widow of a tainted-blood victim. She said, "I applaud Minister Hoskins for re-introducing this bill to make it illegal to pay for blood in Ontario, and it would be prudent for other provinces, as well as Health Canada, to follow his lead."

She went on to say, "I know that my late husband, James Kreppner, would commend the Ontario government for protecting the voluntary blood donation system."

It's time to move forward with Bill 21. In the last Parliament, this Legislature was ground to a halt and was unable to move forward on important pieces of legislation like Bill 21. In fact, only 39% of government bills were passed in the last minority government. That's compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990.

Voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June: They don't want any more of the stalling tactics of the opposition parties. I urge all members of this House to support this motion. They agree with the substance. Let's get this done. Let's help pass this bill as quickly as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak on this closure motion. As I've said in previous debates, there were a couple of bills that the

government House leader asked both parties in opposition to allow quick passage for. This particular bill that this closure motion deals with, Bill 21, was a bill, as I indicated right from the very start, that our party felt needed to have a few extra days of public hearings. In fact, our critic, the member for Whitby-Oshawa, Ms. Elliott, did want to have some public hearings, and I communicated that very openly to the government House leader at our very first House leaders' meeting.

But last week, Speaker, I have to tell you, I had a great suggestion from the Chair of Cabinet, the minister without portfolio, the member for St. Catharines, the Honourable Jim Bradley, and I'm going to take him up on his suggestion.

All of us here have a tremendous admiration for the member from St. Catharines. He has been here since 1977, so that means his 40th anniversary as a member will happen during this term. It's an incredible milestone of public service. I think my colleagues here this afternoon would agree with me that Mr. Bradley has probably forgotten more about the inner workings of this place than some of us will ever know.

Given that respect that I believe we as fellow legislators have for Mr. Bradley, when I was preparing for the debate, I took his suggestion, because who better to look to for some guidance on this troubling issue of time allocation than Jim Bradley?

It's a very important point. No matter on which side of the House you take your seat, deep down I think we all struggle with the concept of shutting down debate. Debate is the hallmark of our democratic society. It's the reason we get up in the morning and come to this place at Queen's Park.

Over the weekend, I took the suggestion that Minister Bradley gave me and I reviewed Hansard over the weekend and checked the official record from my friend the member from St. Catharines.

I have to tell you, it was a very illuminating read to look at his great concern for the erosion of the democratic process when he spoke as a member of the opposition on time allocation motions. I hope that the new members of the Liberal government will pay particularly close attention to his words, because we all know that they don't have to do a lot of research on a bill or on a time allocation motion because the Premier's office is ultimately just going to hand them their speaking notes on that particular motion.

When I looked at the wonderful comments of the minister when he was in opposition, I had to make sure that I put them on the record today. Here's what the esteemed member for St. Catharines had to say on December 11, 2001:

"Mr. Bradley: This is indeed an interesting bill, but what's even more interesting right now is the time allocation motion that faces us. For the people who are watching this perhaps on their television sets at home, I should clarify that. That is the choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation."

Choking off debate—Mr. Bradley has such a way with words. I couldn't have said it better myself. In fact, I think I'll use his words, "choking off debate," during our discussion of this motion.

Let me continue, though, with his remarks of that day. Here's the member for St. Catharines:

"We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That's most unfortunate, because it's what you would call anti-democratic."

Wow: "operating almost exclusively on time allocations" and "anti-democratic." I guess the saying goes that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

I'm going to continue to quote, if you'll allow me, the member for St. Catharines:

"Is this the first government that ever used a time allocation motion or a closure motion? No. But this government has consistently used these motions to pass legislation through this House even after this government imposed upon the Legislature drastic changes to the procedural rules of this House to grease the skids for legislation that it deems appropriate for the province.

"The best way to deal with legislation is to have the government sitting most of the year so it can receive careful analysis and debate in this House and in committees and, in fact, in committees that travel across the province to get meaningful input. We do not have that."

That's an interesting point because that's exactly what the opposition parties have been suggesting to the government. Our party has suggested that we have province-wide hearings on Bill 10. Our party suggested that we have province-wide hearings on Bill 21.

It's interesting, when we look back at the debate, to see that that's exactly what the member for St. Catharines, when he was in opposition, recommended happen so that you could get that feedback.

The next speech not only spoke to the problem with closure but it also talked about the concentration of power in the Premier's office. I know that the current government House leader understands that, because the power of his position has been all but taken away. When it comes to the House leaders, he doesn't actually negotiate with the member for Timmins—James Bay and me; he just carries out orders. He just basically gets the orders from the corner office, from the Premier, and that's what he comes back to dictate to us on.

1400

Here's a bit of a speech from the member for St. Catharines, Mr. Bradley, from May 30, 2001. Here's the member for St. Catharines:

"I regret that we are dealing once again with yet another time allocation motion, which is a motion that chokes off debate in the Legislative Assembly. It is my observation after a number of years, and I think talking to people who have observed this Parliament for a number of years, that it has been diminished so remarkably by this government that it has become almost irrelevant. That is most unfortunate, not simply for those of us who sit in the opposition or for the combatants who are of a

partisan nature in this House, but for the democratic institution that indeed it has been in the past.

"It was once a significant institution, in my view. I remember, as a person before I was elected, coming and sitting in the public galleries. Those were the days where you didn't have somebody blocking you at the door and making you get passes and so on. You simply had to sit in the public gallery and watch the debates that took place. And we did sit in those days; the House did sit both in the daytime and sometimes in the evening, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

"If you listened to the debate in those days—I'll say, admittedly, that there are always those who view the past as perhaps" much "better than the present, but I had a number of students who have gone through the Hansards and read some of the speeches and noted that indeed they were very good speeches in the House in those days. They were more lengthy than they are now, in many cases, so that ideas were able to be elaborated upon. There was a greater detailed analysis of legislation that took place, not only in the House in Committee of the Whole, because often we went to Committee of the Whole to deal with clause-by-clause, but also in committees of the Legislature.

"I think it was more ecumenical than it is today."

The member goes on: "Today the strongest person is the party whip. The party whip simply tells the members of the committee what shall happen, and it happens. That's unfortunate, because on all sides I think members have something to contribute: the opposition to concede when the government has made moves that are acceptable and good, and the government members to find problems that might exist in government legislation. But that is virtually gone. It is virtually dictated now by the Premier's office. The speeches we hear in the House tend to be speeches which seem to originate from the government caucus service bureau, and I understand the need for some research for speeches, but they are virtually meaningless, because they can't influence the government or the procedures that take place. That's most unfortunate."

I wholeheartedly agree with the member for St. Catharines in his speech. Behaviour like he's talking about is very unfortunate, and frankly, I'm surprised that the member is now willing to participate in this, given his so strong views.

Now, granted, those two speeches that I quoted were made at a time when the Progressive Conservative Party sat on the government side. I think we remember those days, especially now that Ontario's economy is struggling under the weight of this government's mismanagement. Those were the days when Ontario's economy was booming. It was a time when our great province was the economic powerhouse driving Canada's economy. Unfortunately, things have changed. I know that sometimes I say we used to be the economic engine and now we're the caboose; that's the railroader family in me. I know that most people know there isn't even a caboose now. This, again, is under the last 11 years of this government.

I know my colleague, the House leader for the third party, is going to have plenty of things to say later about time allocation. But I also want to make sure that, in his remarks, he doesn't just talk about PC governments and Liberal governments. I want to go back a little further in Hansard, if I might.

My friend, the member for St. Catharines, had plenty of things to say, as well, about the NDP and how they ran this place during their reign. I have a speech during a time allocation debate on November 24, 1993. That's right, Speaker. Coincidentally, the speech the member for St. Catharines gave was 21 years ago today. I hope, on this anniversary, that Minister Bradley will throw off the shackles that the Premier's office has placed on him so that he can speak freely, so that he, himself, can quote some of his past comments in Hansard. Here's a replay of that debate, 21 years ago, on November 24, 1993. I appreciate it's long, so I would ask the members' indulgence, but it's very profound words.

Mr. Bradley: "I wish to speak to the closure motion which is before the House by once again indicating my concern at the number of closure motions which have been forthcoming from the government House leader and under the NDP government of Bob Rae.

"The reason I do that is that in many years gone past Mr. Rae entered the House in a by-election when Mr. Lewis resigned. Mr. Rae became the leader after Mr. Cassidy stepped down as leader. I can well recall that he felt very strongly about the fact that the opposition should have the opportunity to fully canvass all the arguments on any of the bills before the House, and he was a very strong defender of that particular opportunity....

"I'm concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate. I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that's been going on a very long period of time. But as I've indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening.

"All of us have experienced the situation where we have encountered our constituents and they've said, 'What is this particular bill all about?' or 'How did this bill get passed and I didn't know anything about it?' They are legitimate questions. One of the reasons is that the bills tend to get passed very rapidly in this House.

"Sometimes there are hearings. There is going to be a bit of an opportunity for hearings in this case. I think there should probably be more time provided for that, but also I think it's important to provide more time to discuss the amendments that might be brought forward by both the government and the opposition. If the hearings are going to be meaningful, if the hearings are going to be worthwhile, then I think it's exceedingly important for there to be legitimate debate over the amendments that flow from those hearings. That's what makes a bill stronger.

"If we want the Parliament to work on a more or less consensus basis rather than a confrontational basis, it's important for the government to be able to accept amendments from its own members who may have some

good ideas or from members of the opposition. Sometimes the members of the opposition put them forward at the behest of those who have made appearances before the committee.

I think it's important to at least debate those adequately. The provision of this closure motion really means that there won't be the opportunity for that kind of debate which I think is very healthy for legislation of this kind."

And it goes on and on and talks about Mr. Rae and the member for Windsor-Riverside. It goes through a very long debate. But the one aspect that I want is when Mr. Bradley talks about the Speaker. In that speech he says:

"You as Chair, Madam Speaker, sitting in that position, used to have more power. You used to be able to use more discretion to determine, as an independent person, as a person with personal judgement, how much time should be allocated to any piece of legislation or whether in fact enough debate had taken place. While there may have been quarrels from time to time with what a Speaker indicated by way of ruling, there was a general consensus that one should accept that ruling and the House should proceed."

That was interesting. Back in that time, the Speaker had the discretion to allow debate to continue; and then the issue of time allocation came forward.

In the speech he also used the word "henchman," which was a word that I'm not sure—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was a henchman back then.

Mr. Steve Clark: But he said the word should have been "protégé" rather than henchman when it comes to government members, so he didn't use it to you, sir.

What I want to say is that it was an excellent speech by the member. He was very consistent when he was in opposition. No matter what party was in government, he had very, very strong views about time allocation. I actually want to thank him for giving me the suggestion to go through some of his speeches and quote them today. I think it was very appropriate.

What I want to say is that when you look at the comments appealing to Mr. Rae's government not to be mouthpieces, not to concede to the unelected advisers, I think it's wonderful advice for the new members of the Liberal caucus to not just take what you're given and read it in the House.

I know that the member for St. Catharines was very sincere 21 years ago when he made those comments. I know he was sincere in 2001 when he made those comments. I want to again say that we need to put that type of comment on the record.

I again want to reiterate that when I was asked by the government House leader about letting some bills pass, which would basically have them debated a few hours, go a few days in committee and come back here, we did not say no. But there were some bills, like Bill 21, where we were honest and open with the government and said we wanted to have some hearings.

1410

So on behalf of our caucus, I would like to move an amendment on this motion. I would like to move that the

motion be amended by adding the following after the second paragraph:

“That the committee be authorized to hold public hearings in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury;” and

That the fourth bullet point in the third paragraph be amended by deleting the word “second” and substituting “eighth”; and

That the fourth paragraph be amended by deleting “Wednesday, December 3, 2014” and substituting “the first weekday following the completion of public hearings”; and

That the fifth paragraph be amended by deleting “Thursday, December 4, 2014” and substituting “the second weekday following the completion of public hearings”; and

That the sixth paragraph be amended by deleting “Thursday, December 4, 2014” and substituting “that day”; and

That the seventh paragraph be amended by deleting “no later than Monday, December 8, 2014” and substituting “the first sessional day following completion of clause-by-clause”.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Clark has moved that the motion be amended by adding the following after the second paragraph:

“That the committee be authorized to hold public hearings in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury;” and

That the fourth bullet point in the third paragraph be amended by deleting the word “second” and substituting “eighth”; and

That the fourth paragraph be amended by deleting “Wednesday, December 3, 2014” and substituting “the first weekday following the completion of public hearings”; and

That the fifth paragraph be amended by deleting “Thursday, December 4, 2014” and substituting “the second weekday following the completion of public hearings”; and

That the sixth paragraph be amended by deleting “Thursday, December 4, 2014” and substituting “that day”; and

That the seventh paragraph be amended by deleting “no later than Monday, December 8, 2014” and substituting “the first sessional day following completion of clause-by-clause”.

Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I can't say that I'm pleased to rise in this debate because, quite frankly, I think it's a sad thing that we're having to yet again use time allocation in this House. I would remind members of the House that when this particular Parliament came back after the last election, the government with great, I would say, fanfare talked about the importance of being able to have the opposition and the government work together in order to pass a very busy agenda that the government had put forward.

The Premier, through the media and then eventually the government House leader with the House leaders of the Conservative and New Democratic parties, said that they wanted to find a way for us to be able to work together, to deal with the agenda that the government is putting forward, and that they sent us a very direct signal. That signal was, “You tell us what it is you want, and if it's reasonable, we will accommodate; but you need to allow us to pass a part of our agenda in a fairly reasonable way from a time frame” from their perspective. So we went back and said, “Okay, that's interesting. That's a step in the right direction.”

I know that I did, and I know that Mr. Clark, the member from—

Mr. Steve Clark: Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Leeds–Grenville, did, as the House leader for the Conservative Party, look at the agenda the government had put forward. I think originally it was four bills. Now it's up to seven or eight bills, so it was a bit of a moving target, which is a whole other issue that I'll raise in a minute. We looked at it and said, “Okay, let us go back to our people, think about if we had to pick from these bills, which ones we really want to have some time on, to make sure we give the bill proper time to be dealt with in the House and in committee. We'll come back and make some recommendations.”

Well, we got back and we started sort of testing the waters and saying, “Okay, we understand the government wants to move these bills forward, but we need to have some time for public hearings—and public hearings doesn't mean just here at Queen's Park. It means going to Hamilton, it means going to northern Ontario, it means going to eastern Ontario and different places around this province, so that the public can be part of this process, because after all this is the people's Parliament. This doesn't belong to you and I as elected members. We're only here as the people doing the work of the public that sent us here.”

So we came forward with some suggestions about some of the travel that we would expect to see, and I don't think it was really unreasonable what had been put forward, but it was an opening position. I guess you could say that the government may have thought that the opposition was asking too much. Maybe that was their position; I don't know. But we never got to the second step. They never came back and said, “Well, you know what? On this particular bill, you're asking for X number of days of public hearings and travels around Ontario. We're not happy with that. We would like to cut it down to” whatever. We never got to the second step of the discussion. This from a Premier who says she wants to get in a conversation with Ontarians. God, she can't even get in a conversation with us, in her own Legislature.

So the government turns around and says, “Never mind. We're going to time-allocate everything.” What was the point of asking us that in the first place if the government had no intention of working with the opposition and determining some sort of way of moving forward that allowed the government to get their bills but

also gave an opportunity to give public scrutiny to those bills that were of most interest to Ontarians and to the opposition?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an insult.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would say, yes, it was a bit of an insult, because we went out and did the work and the government wasn't even entertaining us getting back to them with what might have been, I think, a fairly reasonable compromise.

I understand that negotiations, on all sides, go this way: Government, when they put something forward, will try to minimize it; the opposition will go back and try to get as much as they can. But the real beauty of the system, if it works well, is that no party walks away from a House leaders' meeting in this Legislature feeling completely satisfied that they got everything that they wanted, because, like life, it's a bit of a compromise. So the government has had to give us something when it comes to public hearings, and in doing that—I think it would be a better process for their bills, and I'll get into that later. We might have happened to give in a bit.

No, not only did they say they were going to time-allocate the four bills that they told us they were absolutely needing to get—and this was the list of bills; it grew to five, then it was six, then it was seven. Now it's up to eight. So I say to the government: Get straight. Decide what the hell your priorities are—pardon the language, Speaker; I take that back. Decide what the heck your priorities are when you come to the opposition to talk about moving your agenda forward.

We all understand there may be things that come out of the ordinary—and not ordinary, I should say, in this place—where you've got to deal with something; for example, SARS when the Conservatives were in government. You had to deal with that right away. In this case, the question of sexual harassment and the non-reporting by people who have been harassed—I understand those kinds of things come up, and yes, that might skew the agenda somewhat. But generally the government knew what they wanted this fall. I can't believe that they came to the fall session and said, "Oh, my God, we have no idea what we want. Let's just make it up as we go." I know it may look that way, but no government—

Mr. Bill Walker: That might be the case.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I hope they don't operate that way. They had to know what they wanted. Instead, what they're doing is they're relying on time allocation.

Well, from the government perspective, it all comes down to what we heard the Deputy Premier say, that these are only tactics by the opposition; it's all about game-playing; it's about the opposition trying to hold up the government. Poppycock! This is a Parliament. Go back and read your history. It has been in development for almost 1,000 years, and the whole premise behind the parliamentary system is that the government gets to put forward legislation, and the opposition gets a chance to scrutinize, along with the public. And guess what? The government gets its way. We understand that. That's how Parliament is run in this place, and it's how it has run in

England for millennia—or not millennia but for hundreds of years—because the British parliamentary system is based on, over the years, the development of a system where there is that compromise between always understanding that the executive must have its way and also understanding that there needs to be some scrutiny and that the opposition is there to scrutinize legislation and, yes, at times, to propose, as has been the case in every Parliament. The opposition, either by way of private members' bills, by opposition day motions or by questions in the House, proposes ideas to the government that we hope the government is going to go with at one point. That's the way the system should work.

But no, the government decided it's going to time-allocate everything. What are you really achieving here by way of time allocation? You're going to rush your legislation through, after six and a half hours of hearings, at six and a half hours of debate at second reading. You're going to get a two-hour debate at the time allocation motion, and then it will get time-allocated into committee, with one or two days of hearings, a day maybe of clause-by-clause. Everything is going to be truncated. We're going to have a flawed bill. It will come back for third reading, and we'll get two hours of debate, if we're lucky, the time divided equally between the whole gang of us. Who really is being served in this scenario? Is it the government? Well, the government would say yes, because they get their agenda forward. But does it make for better legislation? I argue it does not.

1420

I will propose that for probably 80% of what's on the order paper today, the opposition could agree on passage, on some sort of quick passage, where there would be less time spent on certain bills and more time spent on others, as is the case. If the government took the time to sit down and try to work a way to go through it, we could get through a huge part of the order paper fairly quickly. That's the way it used to work around here.

When I first got here, there was no such thing as time allocation. Hey, there weren't even limits to speeches. Members used to get up in this House, and if they wanted to speak for two hours or they wanted to speak for two weeks, they had the right to do so, and God bless.

But what used to have to happen, and this is what we've lost, is that the opposition House leaders, along with the government House leader, would sit down and they would figure out how to make the agenda move forward. The government couldn't, on their own, force legislation through the House, because there was no time allocation. As a result, there was a need for the government to sit down with the opposition and try to find a way forward.

Here's the biggest difference, and my colleague the House leader for the Conservative Party, from Leeds-Grenville, mentioned it in the speeches that Mr. Bradley made, and Mr. Bradley is 100% right. The power of this Legislature has moved from the floor of the House to the corner office of the Premier. That's what has happened

over the last number of years. Is that good? If you're the Premier, it's wonderful. You get all the power. You get to do what you want. It's almost like government by fiat. But I think it's a bad thing, because it doesn't allow members to have the kind of say, both by way of debate at second and third reading—but, more importantly, to allow their constituents and stakeholder groups that they represent to have their say through the committee process.

There was at the time, when there was no time allocation, a need for the government to sit down and to work out with the opposition what should happen. I remember, for example, there was a guy by the name of Mike Harris. I'm going to say a nice story about Mike today.

Mike Harris decides, in opposition to Bob Rae, that he doesn't like the NDP budget. All right, fair enough; he had his right. He's an opposition member who had a particular point of view that I disagreed with, as a government member, but he had the right to have that particular point of view. Mr. Harris walked into the House and essentially said, "No deals until that budget travels X amount of days in X cities across Ontario." It held up the House for a period of a couple of weeks.

Mr. Harris got up, and in introduction of bills, guess what? There were no limits for time when it came to introduction of bills. Mr. Harris got up and he started reading bill after bill: "I move that the name of the lake in" such-and-such a place "be changed."

I remember Mr. Gravelle, the member for—

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thunder Bay—Superior North.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Thunder Bay—Superior North, was here. He remembers. He got up—

Interjection: Rivers and lakes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was rivers and lakes. He changed the names, or did something in the naming, of every river and lake in the province of Ontario, as a way to get the government to sit down and to negotiate.

When our House leader—I can use his name, because he's no longer here—Mr. Dave Cooke, refused to negotiate with then-House leader Ernie Eves—I can use his name, because he's not here, but I can't use the name for Jim Bradley, because he was here, so I'll have to say the member for whatever his riding was.

Mr. Steve Clark: St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. Did I get it right? Okay, that's good. I love having you guys around me.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'll keep making sure you're getting all the riding names right.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's really good vibes and dynamics.

But the point is that Mr. Cooke was forced to sit down with the opposition and to try to find a way forward. Mr. Harris, at the time—I didn't like it. I wasn't in agreement. I can tell you that 74 members in government were not in agreement. But he had his right, as an opposition member, to use the rules of the House in order to make his point, and to use them as leverage with the government to be able to move forward what he was trying to do.

So we gave in. As a way of being able to move forward and to get some of our legislative agenda through, we gave Mr. Harris, then leader of the third party, a period of a couple of weeks of hearings across Ontario.

Guess what? He got his hearings. We heard a lot of stuff during those hearings, some of which I didn't like. I was there. Je me souviens. But some of it was good suggestions that we actually took.

In those particular hearings, I remember, there were some issues in regard to municipal tax assessment. There were issues around resource-based taxes. There were different things that were raised that were problems within the existing tax code—not that we had raised taxes, but there were problems in the existing tax code and within existing legislation that allowed people to organize and bring before the committee, and guess what? Some of that stuff, if it didn't find itself in the budget, found its way into legislation in order to deal with those particular issues that were raised.

As a government member, I didn't do all of those hearings; I only did a couple of days of them. But I remember there were some really compelling arguments made on particular issues that we had to move forward. So my point is, yes, it was a tactic, as the Deputy Premier says, on the part of the opposition then to be able to get the attention of the government. But at the end of the day, the government had to make a deal in order to be able to move forward.

But here's the kicker: The opposition then agreed to a bunch of bills they had no interest in holding up. The opposition said, "We're prepared to give you this bill. We'll give you that bill. We'll take no time at third reading; just bring it in for a vote. We're done in committee on this one." There was a whole bunch of the legislative agenda of the government of the day that got agreed to by both sides of the House, because the Liberals wanted something and the Conservatives wanted something, and we got a good chunk of our legislative agenda done in exchange for a couple of weeks of hearings on the budget bill. Was that a bad thing? Absolutely not.

The problem with time allocation is that it takes away the ability of the opposition to put some pressure on the government to negotiate, and that's why they won't get rid of it. The government has no interest in changing the rules, because as long as the corner office, the Premier of Ontario, who says she's so progressive, can use the draconian hammer, she will use the draconian hammer called time allocation—whoa, "time allocation."

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'll make the allegations; she'll do the allocation.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. That was a bit of a Freudian slip. But in the end, it doesn't serve anybody, in my view.

Remember that the whole idea of time allocation is counterproductive, because what it does is not only force every other bill to be debated, which normally wouldn't be debated at any length; it also makes for flawed legislation. I used the example the other day of the sustainable

forestry development act, when we brought that out for travel; and I do remember, under the Conservatives, that there was the change to the municipal assessment act—changes that were put forward where we had pretty wide public consultations. In both cases, members of the government and members of the opposition—in one case an NDP government, in the other case a Conservative government—listened to what people had to say, didn't do everything they asked, but made some changes.

I remember being on the municipal assessment act changes at the time—that would have been about 1996, somewhere around there. I remember having reams of notes of stuff on the assessment system because we were moving from one system to another. We had just moved into market value, and we were moving, at that time, into AVA, actual value—I forget what they called it; there have been so many machinations. But there were problems in the way it was done.

When we went to Committee of the Whole, guess what? We got some of those changes done. That, I think, was a good service to the people of Ontario, because it made a more functional bill. I think it was a good service for this Legislature, because it allowed members to participate, knowing they could actually have their say. And I think it was good for the government, because they ended up with a better product at the end.

The other thing that has happened indirectly as a result of time allocation is that it has taken us away from using Committee of the Whole House as a way of being able to deal with bills between second and third reading. There were a number of bills, I remember when I first got here, that were not the type of bills you really had to do a lot of public hearings on. They were pretty straight-up kinds of bills. Everybody was in agreement; there was no disagreement on all sides of the House. So, rather than sending the bill directly from second to third reading, we would send it to Committee of the Whole. You were there, Mr. Speaker. You were elected in 1990, along with myself, and we used to deal with a fair amount of bills at second reading.

Do you remember Noble Villeneuve? I can use his name, because he's no longer a member over here. He was from eastern Ontario somewhere. I remember he was on a mission on an agricultural bill; I forget exactly what the bill did. He used Committee of the Whole to great effect by proposing a lot of amendments to the bill as a way of being able to get a particular amendment he wanted, which we didn't want to do. Well, guess what? We did part of what he wanted. Was that a disservice to anybody? I think it was a service to the people of Ontario; a service to members, because they felt as if they were getting something done; and a service for the government, because we made a better bill.

The problem is that in the current system we have now, the government doesn't want to back down on anything, because if they do, they look as if they're weak, and they don't want to amend their bills because, again, it makes them look weak, and they think they know everything. Well, you know what? I learned something a

long time ago: I don't know everything. You rely on the advice you get from people, you listen to conversations and debate about issues and you can refine what you're thinking and what you want to do based on that. So it's a really sad thing that we're not using Committee of the Whole.

1430

I'm going to wrap up in a second, so I just have one other point that I want to make, and that is that the government is not—and I'm just, I guess, repeating what I started off with—doing itself any service by time-allocating because in the end what they're doing is that 80% of the agenda that could be agreed to and passed through the House and through the process fairly quickly isn't. It forces everything to be debated ad infinitum, and I don't think that serves the interest of the public because at the end what you end up with is a flawed bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join—well, it's not a pleasure. I guess I can accuse myself of lying; I can't accuse anybody else. I'm lying when I say that, because it's not a pleasure to join this debate because we shouldn't be having this debate. We should be debating the merits, the problems, the pros and the cons of Bill 21.

Unfortunately, the government has decided once again to ram it through the House, to avoid and stifle the democratic process or, more to the point, in the words of the member for St. Catharines—was it still St. Catharines back in 2001? It might have been St. Catharines when he was first elected back in 1977—Minister Bradley—when he says that this was the choking off of debate and strangulation by regulation. That's what it is, because the government brings in the regulation of a time allocation motion, which basically strangles the debate on Bill 21.

I am one of the members of this Legislature, of whom there are many, who have not had the opportunity to even speak to Bill 21, to even engage in the debate. This is supposed to be a chamber of debate. Sometimes you have to ask yourself if we're actually having that opportunity to use this chamber in the way that it was designed by our forefathers when they considered this Confederation and when they considered this Parliament. Right now, as my friend from Timmins—James Bay has said, it's a chamber that is directed by the corner office on the second floor, particularly in the circumstances we have today, which is a majority government.

We have House leaders' meetings. I join my House leader at those meetings. We're supposed to have meetings to negotiate how this House might operate, how this chamber might debate and how much time we might agree to. As we've said before, there are bills that we're not looking for a great deal of debate on. We could sit down and talk about some of those, but unfortunately that's not happening.

We go in on a Thursday afternoon and there's an edict from that corner office I'm talking about on the second floor, just down the hall—you just go out those doors and turn right; it's right about there. Right about there is that

corner office where all the power lies. I don't believe that was ever the way it was intended—well, I know it wasn't intended because that wasn't the way this Legislature worked when my father was a member here, beginning in 1963. Debate wasn't stifled in that way.

Did somehow the world fall apart in those days? Did somehow we fail to pass the necessary legislation? One of the problems, I think, is that the government passes way too many pieces of legislation—way too many bills. In order to do so, they just have to make sure that they accelerate their agenda, thereby precluding the members of this Legislature from having proper input into those debates.

On this bill itself—as I said, I've not had the opportunity to debate it. But you have to ask yourself: If we can't debate it here, how does one day of hearings—is it one day?

Mr. Steve Clark: A couple of days.

Mr. John Yakubuski: A couple of days of hearings; two days of hearings in Toronto—how does that make this bill the best that it could be? It's just simply not feasible. This is a very significant piece of legislation. It's going to change the way, in law, that plasma is procured in the province of Ontario.

I might point out that I'm a blood donor myself. I've given blood over 50 times. I feel sorry for the people who got it, maybe, but they keep taking mine so somebody must be getting it. But three of our four children have O-negative type blood, which is the rare blood. It's a pretty high percentage in one family. My father had that rare blood. I don't. Having that rare blood makes their blood donations even more critically important. I support the blood donation system here in Ontario and in Canada, Canadian Blood Services.

When the government talks about outlawing the procurement of plasma or allowing it to be done for a fee, they're ignoring some of the facts. That is that 70% of our plasma comes from the United States, where it could easily be plasma that was paid for—easily, plasma that was paid for. Are they going to ban the import of any of those products from the United States? Is that going to be part of the legislation? That requires some debate. You can't have a piece of legislation that would, in fact, make the government hypocritical within its own laws. I would hope not.

But we're not even having the opportunity to talk about that part of the legislation because, once again, they have decided that we will no longer debate this bill. We will have a compressed period of committee hearings. There will be a compressed period of clause-by-clause. It even determines what we can do on third reading, which is going to be—what, two hours? I don't have the motion in front of me. Two hours of debate split equally, I ask my colleague?

Mr. Steve Clark: It is.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Two hours of debate split equally on third reading.

At the end of the day, we're going to have this bill pass—they want to make sure they have this passed

before we leave here in the second week of December. That's their plan. Did they ever hear the carpenter's creed of measure twice and cut once? Let's get these things right instead of ramming them through. Let's have the debate that is necessary. You might learn something.

As my friend from Timmins—James Bay said, he doesn't know everything. I certainly don't know everything, but I'm pretty comfortable in saying that nobody over on the other side knows everything either. But collectively, we may be able to come up with the best piece of legislation that best serves the people of the province of Ontario and best protects the integrity of our blood system.

I recognize that we live in a different system than they do in the United States. I've been in the United States, where you're at a mall parking lot, and there's a mobile bus there collecting blood. You can go in, you can make a donation, and you can get some money for it. I haven't done that. I have not been paid for any of my donations. I wouldn't think that they're that good.

So we do have a different system, but let's not pretend that we're an island unto ourselves here in Canada. We rely on the blood plasma collected in the United States for some of our supply. Wouldn't it be terrible if our supply was curtailed to the point that we couldn't conduct necessary emergency surgeries or other procedures to save lives? That would be wrong.

Mr. Bradley talked about a couple of dates there. I just want to throw it in there that one of those interjections on the NDP government in their time allocation was on November 24, 1993. I'll just say, because it struck me when it was said today, that is also the date that my one-year-old brother, Kim, passed away. It's also that today Pat Quinn, the great coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs, passed away, too. My condolences go out to the family of Pat Quinn. I'm a big fan of his, and I'm sure he will be missed.

What else will be missed is a real, genuine, whole-some debate on Bill 21. You on the government are denying us that opportunity. You are denying the people of Ontario the opportunity to hear that debate. I daresay that, at the end of the day, you will likely have a less comprehensive, weaker piece of legislation than you otherwise might have had. You may have to go back and revisit this sometime because you're going to learn when this legislation is passed—and it's going to be passed because myself and my friend Mr. Bisson and my friend Mr. Clark are powerless to stop you.

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You see, you've got your majority now and you're flexing your muscles. You're going to tell us and the world that “No matter what those” whatever “on the other side of the House think, we're running the show now. We suffered, for that little period of time between 2011 and 2014, in that minority situation, and we're going to let you know all over again that the world is as it should be in Liberal land and you're going to pay the price.” Unfortunately, the people of Ontario are paying that price as well. Shame on you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm privileged, as we all are in this House, to be able to stand up and speak to bills where other people in this province don't have this privilege. Now we have another time allocation bill in front of us that is stopping us from using the privilege that the people of all of our ridings sent us here to do. Not only are we time-allocated in this House, but we're finding ourselves time-allocated in committees. So people across the province, when they want to talk about things that are in committee, are also being stifled and being stopped from doing that process.

I know, Speaker, that some of the best work that happens in this House happens at committee level. So when we have people travelling through the province, or not travelling through the province, shall we say, our communities—I'll get back to that. But people who have travelled here are left for five minutes to speak and give their piece at committee. That's shameful. They have travelled so far. Ontario is a big province and here they're being stuck to five minutes, and then we as members have three minutes to question those people, to maybe help enlighten what they've brought to the table or concerns about what they've brought to the table. But all of that is being taken away in today's Liberal government.

Today, we have Bill 21 in front of us under time allocation. We've had Bill 15, the auto insurance bill, in front of us in time allocation. We've had Bill 18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy, in front of us under time allocation. Bill 8—and this is the most ironic of them all, Speaker, because this is the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act—has been under time allocation. How is it possible that the Liberal government that is talking about accountability and transparency is stifling the very thing from happening in this House by time allocation? There are serious problems going on here. I'm just shocked by the last one.

Which other ones? Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, was here. There have been amendments put forward. We wanted to travel that bill across the province, to speak to child care providers, speak to families who need child care and aren't able to get those services, for them to be able to speak to the bill. This is a major change to the way that child care is being provided in our province. It's something that affects every family in one way or another. Whether it's affecting them today and their young children, or whether it's going to affect their grandchildren or great-grandchildren, this is a major bill that we need to be discussing. And yet this government has decided that they have the only say, that they know best, that nobody else has any ideas or anything that could make this bill better, because they have it all down. They have stifled debate on that, and they have pushed that through under time allocation.

I understand that they came back from this election with a majority, but all of the other people on this side of

the House were also elected by the people in their ridings, by their constituents, to come here to speak on their behalf. When the government of the day, which is this Liberal government, says, "No, we don't need to hear from you because we know it all," there's a problem with that, Speaker.

Let's see what else I have here. Today is Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. New Democrats think this is a good bill. We think it actually should have been done a long time ago, but here we're seeing it in front of us. We're happy to see it move through, but we think there are concerns that some people have about the bill. But they're not going to be able to have their time in court per se to speak to this bill.

Let me find it here. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has this to say about the bill:

"[T]he college will be seeking amendments to fine-tune" the amendments in schedule 2.

"[T]he college does not feel the current 'discretion' language and information-sharing provisions shall meet the intended objectives."

If this is being time-allocated in committee, when is it that the people on the committee are going to have time to absorb these issues that people are bringing forward? They're not. Everything is just going to move very quickly, and people will not have time to say, "Maybe that's a good idea." Right? This is the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Should they not have a say about a bill that, frankly, is going to cover our entire province? They're the people who do the jobs. They're the professionals. We should be listening. We should be taking time. We should be absorbing this information that professionals in these fields, the qualified people, are bringing to us to make sure that we're making amendments that make sense for them.

I find it ironic. When I was listening to a previous speaker before me, I heard comments from the member from St. Catharines, comments about his dislike for time allocation in this House. I'm going to read some, Speaker, because I'll tell you, this is an interesting read. This is from the member from St. Catharines:

"What is disconcerting is watching the steady erosion across this country and other jurisdictions of the democratic process and nobody seeming to care. I think you judge a government, any government, anyplace based on what they do when they think no one is looking. If you can get away with it and you simply implement policies which you think are expedient for yourselves—that's more related to the way this House operates perhaps than policies across the province—if you can get away with it, of course, there's a great temptation to do it. The real people of principle will not utilize that opportunity."

"The real people of principle" right here, the member from St. Catharines said, "will not utilize that opportunity."

Here's another one. These are rich: "Another time allocation motion, of course, and I don't speak in favour nor vote in favour of time allocation motions, for obvious reasons."

"Unfortunately, what most of the population of Ontario—I would say probably over 99%—doesn't realize is that this government is railroading a number of bills through this Legislature."

I'll just stop the quote for a second. You would think he was saying this today in this House, if he was on this side of the House.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: How things have changed.

Miss Monique Taylor: Yes, how things have changed. I'll go back to the quote:

"Since it's not a topical thing to cover in the mass media, it's not going to get the kind of coverage it should and, generally speaking, people in the population don't follow procedural affairs very much. But it is actually disconcerting to watch the way this government is ramming through legislation."

There are many quotes here from the member from St. Catharines. The member from St. Catharines has been in this House for a long time. He is a very respected man in this House. People take what he has to say, usually, pretty seriously. So why aren't his own members taking his own words seriously? Why is this Premier continuing to ram things through for the people of this province?

I think that good debate, good discussion and good policy come from people from across the province able to have their say, able to put their input, and I think it's really unfortunate that this Liberal government doesn't find the usefulness in that, that they don't find the respect for other people of this province to have a say, to make good decisions, to make good laws. It's really unfortunate.

I just have to say this: I'm sure I'll be up in this House again speaking to another time allocation motion, and I find that really unfortunate. Thank you very much for your time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to add some thoughts to this debate, particularly after my colleagues from Leeds–Grenville and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

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I'm going to start off by saying that a little earlier in this debate this afternoon, the Deputy Premier and President of Treasury Board, the former Minister of Health, suggested time allocation. I'd like to suggest to her that one time I'd have liked to see her use time allocation would have been the Markdale hospital decision, because then the people of Markdale and community wouldn't have had 12 years to wait for their health care. In this case, I wish she would have used time allocation. That was the one time I might have agreed she could have used time allocation, and we'd in fact have that hospital built.

I'm going to go back to the current Minister of Health and ask him, perhaps, to do that and speed the process up, so that those great folks in Markdale and area get the hospital that they deserve. I'll be at a meeting there tomorrow night, actually, to hear some of the updates on that. Hopefully, we're going to actually move forward with that project.

It's a case, again, where I really have to step back a little bit. Liberal members used to define allocation as, and I'm going to quote, "a motion that limits, stifles, ends debate and ends the involvement of the people in the province of Ontario in having a say in legislation." It's the height of hypocrisy to be able to come into this House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdrawn, Mr. Speaker; my apologies. Maybe I'll use the term that they say one thing and do another. It has the same end result, I think, and that's what they're doing. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville, in his earlier remarks, referred to the member from St. Catharines as saying in Hansard that they choke debate. Well, what that means to the people of Ontario is that you're not allowing proper discussion to happen; you're not allowing the people of Ontario to have a true say in developing legislation and regulations that, at the end of the day, will impact their lives.

It's been interesting to stand in this House and see Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, time-allocated. My colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, has been trying his best to ensure that the people of Ontario have a true say. This is something that's going to have huge consequences in regard to child care opportunities across Ontario. Certainly, the most important, of course, is what child care provision to our next generation, to our future leaders and constituents, is going to be. It's interesting that they, again, want to just ramrod that one through.

What I'm hearing back in my riding is people saying, "You know, it seems like every time the Liberals come out with something, it's just that they know, they have better thoughts, they have control, they are just going to do what they want, but they don't go back to the actual community." They don't go back to the actual stakeholders, who are closest to most issues, and truly seek their input. They may have the odd meeting here and there, but they certainly don't listen and implement most of that feedback.

The other one—I can't say "the height of hypocrisy," because I know that's unparliamentary, so I won't go there, Mr. Speaker. The Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act that this government introduced: They time-allocated it. How can we actually stand here and not push back? You're bringing in a bill to try to get the people of Ontario to trust you, to say that we truly are coming into this revered House to ensure that we're doing the right thing for Ontarians, and they stifle, they choke off debate on the MPP accountability and transparency act. It doesn't get any worse than that.

It's very tough, when I go back home to my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, to have a discussion, because people are asking, "How can they do this bill? What's going on in that place? What are they thinking?" I'm not making this up, and I'm not the person saying it. These are the comments I'm hearing from my constituents: "How do you stand in that House and listen to this

every day? How do they introduce a bill about accountability and transparency and shut down debate on the very bill they are trying to suggest they, holier than thou, are going to implement on behalf of the great people of Ontario?"

It's a very challenging role to actually not sound partisan on that, because I, honest to goodness, don't understand how those elected members can stand there and say they are doing the right thing, and that they bring in a bill like that and stand solidly behind it and solidly behind their Premier.

The last time I debated Bill 8, we asked to have Laura Miller and Peter Faist—the two people who were the most knowledgeable in that whole boondoggle—brought in front of the committee so that we could actually get to the bottom of the billion-dollar gas plant scandal. The government consistently said, "No, you cannot have access to those two people." Why is that? How can you ask the great people of Ontario to trust you and believe in what you're saying when you won't allow those two key witnesses to come forward? That, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Pursuant to standing order 23(b)(i), I would like to ask my esteemed colleague to please address the subject before the Legislature. I respect his opinion but that is not what's being discussed here this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would just remind all members of the House that it's important to have relevance with respect to the debate. We are now debating actually, if I'm not mistaken, the amendment to the motion, and of course, remarks need to be relevant. I'll remind all members, and I return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleague for bringing that. It's always good to hear the standing orders, and I'm glad to hear that they can cite those off. I remain convinced that if they're going to do those types of things and stand and try to correct us on our record, then they need to ensure that they're actually bringing legislation that's forthright and that they're actually going to stand behind. So I think it is very relevant, because this is the time allocation of this bill, and I'm trying to draw the parallel that you can't come into the House and say one thing about time allocation and go the opposite way. At the end of the day, we need to ensure that we certainly have the ability to discuss these matters.

There is going to be a significant challenge, going forward. When I did my hour leadoff in regard to Bill 21, I did raise the concern that there are going to be, potentially down the road, shortages of blood supply, and I think there is a lot more going into research, particularly in the areas of Alzheimer's and dementia. I find it interesting, again, that this government is not open-minded enough to actually look forward for a change. Rather than always trying to spin it after they've made a

mess of something, why don't you look forward and say, "You know what? There is a looming potential shortage out there." How can they deny people, particularly those who have family members suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's, the ability to ensure that there is a supply available down the road? If that means that there has to be some paid-for-service blood, then that has to be the case.

Currently, today, there is 70% of blood plasma imported from the United States—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Plasma protein. I correct my record.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Products. Not plasma—

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much—plasma protein products. Let's play semantics of the words, but at the end of the day, you still need plasma protein products to be able to do that research to ensure that we have the ability to find a cure somewhere down the road and give those families—so I can't believe that this government is that short-sighted, that they would bring a bill and time-allocate it for their own partisan needs, as opposed to truly thinking about what they need to be doing for the people of Ontario.

If there is some good coming out of the debate today on time allocation, I'd like to put on record that I think we've had a breakthrough, because I believe the member from Timmins—James Bay actually—and I'm going to quote him, acknowledging "glad you are here," as he pointed to the PCs, and that's a pretty rare thing that we hear in this House. So perhaps there is some good to come of it, and we'll move on and hopefully be able to do great things together as the opposition. Our job, of course, is to hold this government to account.

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: A couple of my other NDP colleagues, who I quite like and I think are more on our side than they sometimes let on—but that's a good thing, and we're working hand in glove with them to be able to make sure things are moving forward.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: He's not naming names.

Mr. Bill Walker: No naming names. The members from Manitoulin and Windsor, I really like those guys.

Mr. Speaker, you can see that this bill is having some impact, but just think if we could take it out to all of Ontario and hear from other people, like my colleagues from Windsor and Manitoulin, and actually get the true feedback from all Ontarians. It's what really baffles me when the Liberals continually time-allocate a lot of these bills. If they're forthright and really want—as the Premier continues to say, "I want to work in partnership. I want to work in collaboration. I want to have some conversations." Well, how come you're shutting down debate on half the bills that we've brought into this House? You can't continually do one thing and say the other. At the end of the day, you can't continue to stifle democracy.

The Green Energy Act is one of those, Mr. Speaker. They've stripped totally the ability for local municipally elected politicians to have a say in whether to site wind

turbines in their backyards, for the people that they actually have been democratically elected to represent. There's yet another example. In my three years here, I continually hear one thing but I see another when it comes down to what the Liberals want to do. They come out, they typically have a pretty flashy buzz line and a 30-second cut, and at the end of the day, they do the exact opposite. You can't speak out of both sides of your mouth. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I will not say the word "hypocrisy," because I know that's not allowed in the House, but at the end of the day—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There's another rule that you can't say indirectly what you can't say directly. I have to ask you to withdraw it once again.

Mr. Bill Walker: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker. It's probably a rookie error, and I do apologize. I'm trying to learn as quickly as I can on my feet, and I truly do apologize for using the word "hypocrisy" when I speak about the Liberals, because I know that's unparliamentary, and will not do that in the future, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll attempt to explain again. You can't say indirectly what you can't say directly, so you can't use that word. Don't do it again, please.

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Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker, and I do apologize. I'm glad my colleagues on the opposite side of the House are helping me with my learning curve here in the Legislature. I will do my best to honour the spirit of their intent for once and will do what I can. I hope that they won't stifle the debate on that, at the end of the day—time-allocate my ability to speak.

This is a very important bill. People's lives are on the line when you're talking about blood services and blood transfusion.

Before I finish, I'd like to send out a really strong commendation to all of those people across our great province who give blood. As the slogan says, "It's in you to give." I encourage every Ontarian who has the ability to go and do that. I thank the Canadian Blood Services and all of the volunteer groups that do that.

At the end of the day, it's very important that we have time to truly debate this and know that we're looking to the future. We need to have ways to ensure that that blood supply is there when we need it. If it's your loved one who is in that situation, I think we want to ensure that it's there regardless of what is your principled decision on whether you believe in volunteer blood or paid.

At the end of the day, what we can't be doing on things like this—like Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, or like Bill 8, the MPP Accountability and Transparency Act—is to stifle debate and not allow Ontarians to have a say. If you're truly sincere on that side of the House, then bring these things forward. Allow us to travel the province when we need to. Have the true open debate. That way, we hear, which is what our job is: to listen to the people who put us in the House and enact the best legislation that will serve them to the best of our ability.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed an honour to stand in the House this afternoon and make some further comments on Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. No way can I match the passion of the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound or my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, who spoke so effectively about this bill.

Before I get into the meat and potatoes of what I want to say, let me just give you a quotation, something I found from Walter Lippmann. When we're talking about transparency, when we're talking about the role of the opposition, Mr. Lippmann, way back in 1939, said, "The opposition is indispensable. A good statesman, like any sensible human being, always learns more from his" opponents "than from his fervent supporters."

That's why I think the government should listen to the opposition more. They shouldn't be trying to shut them down. They should be open, they should be transparent and they should be accountable. That's why I believe that, instead of stifling debate, what the government should be doing is going around the province in committee, leading the way back into the ridings where the people suffered from a lack of the proper chemotherapy drugs.

I know that it was discovered in Peterborough. I had more than 200 in my area, in Windsor-Essex. I believe there were more than 600 patients in London who got the diluted chemotherapy drugs. The government, if you want to be accountable, if you want to be transparent, should be in those communities, meeting face to face with the men and women and children who did not receive the drugs, the treatment, that they were supposed to be given.

Speaker, I can imagine, if you're told you have cancer, if you're told you're going to have to undergo this treatment, that you put your faith in the system, you put your faith in the doctors and you put your faith in your medication. Who knows what long-term effects you will suffer because your initial treatment was not what it was supposed to be?

Just take the common cold, Speaker. If you're supposed to "take two tablets and call me in the morning" but your two tablets are only a quarter of a tablet, you're going to make more than one call in the morning. You don't know, if you would have taken those initial two tablets, if your cold would have gotten better overnight. It's much, much worse when you're dealing with cancer and when you're dealing with a diluted drug.

Let's change this focus a bit. Let's have the government go out on the road, go out into those communities—don't go to New Brunswick, Speaker. Let's just keep it in Ontario, but we do know that a lot of people in New Brunswick were affected by this lack of the proper drug as well.

I think that's what this government should be doing. I think they should be held accountable, and they should be held accountable to the people who elected them, to the people across this great province. They shouldn't be

afraid. They shouldn't be afraid to take this on the road. They shouldn't be afraid to meet the people face to face and hear the stories—to hear from the people who were actually affected by getting drugs that were not what they were supposed to be. I just don't get it. You want to silence the voice of the opposition. You want to limit your debate.

I'll give you another quotation, if I can, Speaker; this one from Harry S. Truman, back in 1950. He was addressing Congress, and he said:

“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”

I don't want to live in fear in Ontario. I don't want people in hospitals to live in fear. I don't want the government to be afraid of facing up to the people who received drugs that were not what they were supposed to be. I think we have to be open. We have to be accountable. We have to face the music. We have to face the people whom our methods have affected. We went out to tender for a drug. We went to the lowest common bidder. We changed the way we used to do business, and they weren't given the drugs they were supposed to receive, that they had been receiving before. And it was only because a couple of alert people working in the pharmacy at the hospital in Peterborough caught it, so only one person was affected in Peterborough. But by then, more than 1,000 people had received drugs that weren't up to standard.

Speaker, when you want to silence the voice of the opposition, when you want to time-allocate a bill, you're silencing the voices of the people who did not get what they thought they were getting. They did not get what they pay for. And that is not right. Ontario's health care system deserves better than that, the people in Ontario deserve better than that and, Speaker, the government deserves to treat the opposition and the people of Ontario better than this. This is not something they should be proud of. They want to be accountable, they want to be transparent, and yet they want to slam the door on debate. They want to slam the door on the people who wish to speak to them, who wish to bring their stories to the people who make the decisions.

Speaker, I can't support time allocation. I know the government wants to do it. I don't understand it—the government that prides itself on being open, transparent, accountable at the right time. But I guess this is not the time: not the time for debate, not the time to be held accountable, and for that I say shame, shame, shame.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege and a pleasure to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

C'est tout le temps un plaisir d'apporter la voix, les problèmes, les « concerns » et les idées venus des

résidents d'Algoma-Manitoulin, surtout sur ce projet de loi-ci et puis l'allocation de temps sur le projet de loi.

On s'est tous embarqués dans la position qu'on a tous été élus ici pour une raison. Puis, il y a plusieurs gens qui, quand je vais dans mon comté et que je leur parle et que je les rencontre, une des plus grosses questions, et je suis certain que plusieurs gens se la font poser ici dans la Chambre, c'est : « Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas à tellement d'événements? Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas à une fête? Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas à un anniversaire? Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas à un évènement sur le cancer? Pourquoi est-ce que tu vas à un carnaval? » Bien, je vais vous le laisser savoir. Une des plus grosses raisons c'est pour écouter leurs idées. C'est pour me donner la chance d'améliorer les miennes et mes connaissances de ce qui se passe dans ma circonscription.

1510

Quand je pars de l'île Manitoulin, de Gore Bay ou de Meldrum Bay pour aller jusqu'à Espanola ou Killarney, et puis que je traverse sur la North Shore pour me rendre à Prince township, aller à Goulais River et jusqu'à Wawa, Chappleau, Hornepayne et puis Manitouwadge—oui, c'est un gros territoire, et j'en ai juste nommé quelques-uns. Mais nous, comme députés ici, ça devrait être un « incitatif » qu'on devrait se représenter, se redonner et se reconformer à nos citoyens de l'Ontario, d'aller écouter leurs paroles et d'aller écouter ce qu'ils veulent partager avec nous autres, surtout dans l'amélioration d'un projet de loi comme tel.

Fermer le débat ou limiter l'opportunité, en effet, d'avoir les discussions avec les gens de l'Ontario, je vais vous dire, ce n'est pas la bonne ligne à prendre. Ce n'est vraiment pas ce à quoi les Ontariens s'attendent de nous. Les Ontariens veulent participer à ce qu'eux-mêmes voient être leur processus législatif. Ils veulent participer et veulent apporter leur point de vue. Mais, en limitant le montant de temps qu'on a ici, vraiment, on a fermé le débat. Mon collègue de Leeds—oh, donnez-moi une petite seconde-là.

Sorry. I'm going to talk about you, Steve.

Mr. Steve Clark: It's all right, buddy.

M. Michael Mantha: Mon collègue de Leeds-Grenville a vraiment utilisé et a donné des commentaires tantôt dans son discours. Il a utilisé des mots comme « choking off debate ». On étouffe la conversation, c'est comme ça que ça se dit en français. Il a aussi dit « anti-démocratique » parce qu'on ne va pas dans les communautés qui ont vraiment été affectées par la dilution des médicaments les gens ont pris le temps de mettre leur sagesse et leur confiance dans les médicaments qui ont été dilués et ils les ont reçus, puis ils n'ont pas reçu la propre attention à leur santé.

Quand on a été élu—et puis félicitations au gouvernement. Ils ont eu un gouvernement majoritaire. Mais on a entendu un message, moi-même, qui était bien clair, de la première ministre. C'était qu'elle était pour être un gouvernement transparent et puis « accountable ». Comment est-ce qu'on se rend transparent et puis « accountable »? C'est en sortant des murs qu'on a ici et

en allant avoir la discussion avec les gens de l'Ontario. C'est en allant les écouter. C'est d'écouter les experts. C'est d'écouter les gens qui ont été affectés par les problèmes ou les projets de loi qui sont présentés où on a la discussion avec tout le monde à travers cette province.

Mais on décide maintenant qu'on va étouffer ce débat-là. On va leur permettre—mais il faut que tu te rendes ici à une certaine date et à une telle heure. Il faut que tu sois ici. Tu as deux minutes, un tout petit peu de temps, pour expliquer ta situation, et puis après ça tu as deux ou trois minutes pour donner une réponse, ou pour nous autres, comme parlementaires, de questionner les personnes qui apportent leur témoignage. Est-ce que c'est démocratique? Non. Moi, je dis que non.

Je pense qu'on doit plus aux Ontariens. Je pense qu'on devrait prendre plus d'emphase, et non pas seulement faire des décisions qu'on fait ici dans la Chambre. On devrait prendre le temps d'aller communiquer avec les gens de notre province et de vraiment les écouter, non seulement les gens, mais aussi les experts.

L'allocation de temps, est-ce que ça va marcher? Moi, je dis que non et il y a plusieurs autres Ontariens qui vont être d'accord avec mon opinion. Encore, c'est tout le temps un plaisir d'élever la voix des gens d'Algoma-Manitoulin, mais aujourd'hui, le gouvernement, encore une fois, a étouffé le débat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup. Further debate?

Mr. Clark has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 9. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bill.

I wish to inform the House that I have received not one but two requests for deferral. Therefore, according to standing order 28(h), the vote will be deferred until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPRE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 20, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated second reading of this bill, the member from

Niagara Falls had the floor. I will now ask for further debate.

The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do my best not to say anything that needs to be withdrawn today.

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, from the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, is reintroduced from the last Parliament's Bill 176.

The Liberal government will talk a lot today—if they choose to stand and speak to this bill; it's not time-allocated, perhaps—about how they've overachieved. Last week, the finance minister, in his fall economic outlook, used the word "overachieved." In the 11 years this government has been in power, they have doubled our debt. They spend more on debt servicing yearly than they do on the whole social services sector I am privileged to be the critic for. I'm not certain what definition of overachievement that meets. It certainly does not meet the overachievement expectations of the Conservative Party on this side of the House.

They'll talk today about how they built a strong and dynamic economy in Ontario. There are hundreds of thousands of people who wake up every morning without a job. Every day in my constituency office, people are coming in saying, "Bill, things are bleak. Things are grim. I need help." We've lost 350,000 manufacturing jobs, a lot of that attributed to both their mismanagement and the high, high energy prices that have tripled under their tenure, and they're talking about another doubling to tripling in the next four years.

So I struggle at times, and I'm trying to be objective. I'm trying to give them a fair shake to turn things around, to bring a different approach. For my first two and a half years here, under Premier Dalton McGuinty, I saw them going down the track of saying, "We know. We're going down this path." They didn't want to listen. They didn't want to accept input from either the official opposition or the third party.

In a minority Parliament, we were at least trying to hold their feet to the fire and make sure they made good decisions. Now they have the majority, under Premier Kathleen Wynne. I spoke just recently to another bill, the MPP accountability and transparency act, Bill 8, and they're time-allocating. They time-allocated that piece of legislation, that bill.

Again, they say one thing and do totally another. I'm not going to use a certain word, because I know it's inappropriate to use in this House, Mr. Speaker. I respect that of you, and I know there's a member opposite just hoping I use that word so he can get back in the photo again, but I'm not going to give him that luxury this time. I gave him two last time.

Mr. Speaker, if they bring those types of things—overachievement and how wonderfully they've built our economy—I'm just going to stand over here and say that those are absolutely pure fallacies, and then I'm going to

turn around and I'm going to try to provide some facts for the great people in this House and those listening at home—and especially for the pages sitting in front, because we're going to hand the torch to you, and I want to make sure this province is in better shape than today when you're my age, and that you have the ability to drive for your families going forward.

Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. The unemployment rate is 6.5%, which is way too high for the province historically. Again, I think my colleague from Leeds–Grenville used the analogy today that we used to be the engine of Confederation, then we became the caboose, and now we're not even certain what the caboose is.

What I think of when I think about how this government has led us to the economic demise we are in is that machine at the end of the railway track. I don't know what it's called, Mr. Speaker. Maybe Mr. Clark, with his background and family on the railroad would know, but it's one of those things where there are two people and they're going up and down. At the end of the day, it's a bit like where I think the government is taking us. They're up and they're down, but they really have no consistent plan.

Interjection: A handcar.

Mr. Bill Walker: An endcar. Thank you very much, to whoever anonymously shouted that out to me. It's a endcar. Well, this is an endcar, sadly, and my hope is that we don't go off the end of the tracks into the pit, the debt hole they have dug for us.

I wanted to stand again today, Mr. Speaker, because I believe the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change was talking about the children. I want to remind him that every child born in this great province starts their life—the first minute of their life—with \$21,000 of debt. That is a sad place to be.

1520

Ontario, once the manufacturing bastion of Canada, has been abandoned by Electro-Motive Diesel, Heinz, McCormick-Beta Brands and Kellogg's, all leading major economic losses around Ontario communities. I believe even in the great riding of Fergus there was a large factory, a 100-year-old factory that went out of business under the tenure of this Liberal government, partly, again, because of their mismanagement of the economy, the high energy rates, the red tape that they've created—and all the while wasting billions of dollars on boondoggles like the gas plant fiasco that has never produced nor will ever produce a single kilowatt of power; and Ornge, that absolute boondoggle of our health care system where, sadly, four people have died. We see those tragedies continuing. We have the eHealth boondoggle, another billion dollars that could be going to the front line, to our hospitals, to our schools, to those that need community services and need a hand up. It's a sad day when they continually come into this House and again say, "We are the masters of the economy." The bar is pretty low.

In my riding in the last number of years we've lost a thousand jobs—in London, 30,000 jobs since 2008. Half

a million people remain unemployed today and half a million children live in poverty in today's Ontario—half a million. That's simply unacceptable when we see the continued waste of dollars and resources by this government—and no change, might I add. I don't see a difference of approach from this government since I've been here in my three years. Under new leadership with Premier Wynne, it's the exact same. There are some new people in the front rows and a few in the second row who I think are trying to make some change, but at the end of the day I don't see anything significantly changing under this government's leadership.

This is no achievement; in fact, it's colossal mismanagement and continues to be. After 11 years of mismanagement that ushered in thousands of new regulations, red tape that—again, small businesses, medium businesses, large businesses are saying to me, "Bill, I'm drowning in it. I'm spending more time doing paperwork and shuffling paper for the government's needs than I am spending time with my clients, with my customers, or even with my own people to give them better training and more safety opportunities."

The Liberal government wants to unburden the Ontario public and businesses by setting up a so-called Burden Reduction Reporting Act. I'm not certain how many more studies this government can do. I'm not certain how many more high-paid consultants they're going to hire.

Again, when I first arrived they had hired Don Drummond, the TD economist, a renowned economist, their choice. They had that whole report put in front of them. At the end of the day, they were going to be proud and say, "We've implemented the bulk of those recommendations." Well, all the minor stuff out on the edges—they've tweaked at the edges, but none of the significant, none of the really true, strong decisions that have to be made to move us forward have actually been implemented from that study. I'm fearful that the Burden Reduction Reporting Act—they should at least be stepping back, saying, "Why do we need a Burden Reduction Reporting Act?" if not for their failure to have a very streamlined process that allows people to get to work.

Firstly, it's ironic that this bill is coming from a party that, up until the year 2012, would not even acknowledge red tape was a serious problem in Ontario. But irony aside, I think it's about time to eliminate unnecessary government burdens, especially the outrageous ones. Again, I'm going to cite some examples because I believe the people really need to see that we're putting a thought process into this, and we want to be an opposition that truly holds them accountable and holds them to transparency, which they strongly suggest they want to do, despite—once again reminding the public—that they've time-allocated that very bill that they're introducing into this House.

Just as an example, and I spoke about this specific example last month in response to the government's announcement to redevelop long-term-care beds, an investigation into Ontario's LTC, long-term care, found

that “there are as many as 160 distinct steps, including accessing nine separate databases, just to move a senior from hospital into a long-term-care bed in Ontario.” Mr. Speaker, 160 steps: Someone in that state who needs health care, and we’re putting them through 160—just think of it, not only for the patient but the family of that patient, having to go through that type of bureaucracy and burden to move a loved one from one facility to another. There’s no way anyone, I don’t think, even on that side of the House, can stand here and proudly say that they’re proud of that and they support that there needs to be a 160-step process to move someone from a facility to another.

“Bureaucracy is such an obstruction that consultants to industry in the US ... are being retained to help streamline the process of moving seniors into Ontario nursing homes.” Again, we’re hiring people from the United States. God love our cousins to the south, but I’d rather see that money going to the front line. I’d like to see that money going to the actual patients who are coming through my office saying, “I can’t find a bed. I have no ability to get my loved one the services they need.” They’re actually cutting back on home care services in some cases. Again, they’re spending money on a consultant from the US and we’re telling our constituents, “Sorry, but there’s no more service for you because there’s not enough money from this government.”

Unfortunately, such bizarre facts are not limited to the long-term-care situation. Government or regulatory burden is widespread and costs over \$11 billion in lost productivity annually. If you took that \$11 billion in lost productivity that we could be putting through our economy, helping those people at the front lines, providing much-needed jobs, providing health care, providing education, providing those in community services and special needs with the service they need—\$11 billion there. Then take the \$10.5 billion this government spends on interest payments on the debt that they, and only they, have amassed. Think of that. That’s \$21 billion—billion, with a B—that could be going to the front line to help those people wanting a job, to help those seniors who need help.

They are now saying you are going to get less home care in some places. We’re going to go to the Alzheimer Society. In my riding, I just met with the executive director, Deborah Barker, a couple of weeks ago about this very specific fact. They’re stretched to the max. They’re already picking up a lot of other burdens, and this government just callously says, “We’ll cut back, but you just go out to another group like Alzheimer’s and dementia, and get your help there.” Well, they are breaking at the seams and can’t keep up as it is. So how do we just download that; take it off our accountability and put it onto someone else? That’s not acceptable from any government, and specifically not from this Liberal government.

I especially look forward to seeing how this government reduces and/or streamlines the regulation burdens on farmers, who sadly are fed with red tape. Again,

farmers in my riding, those who have had generations and generations, are bringing their concerns to me and telling me, “Bill, I don’t know how much more we can do in regard to red tape. I never have time to be on the land. I never have time to be on my tractor. I don’t have time to actually teach the next generation because I’m spending so much time filling out paperwork that, in the end, does nothing but burden me more and take me away from what I love to do.”

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture gave both Premiers McGuinty and Wynne specific recommendations with regard to reducing the regulatory burden on farmers. The first and foremost recommendation was to involve the agriculture and agri-food sector in the regulatory development process. What a novel idea: going to the grassroots, going to the people at the very forefront of any industry and saying, “How can we do it better? What can we eliminate that is slowing you down, taking your eye off the ball, and not allowing you to be as productive and creative and innovative as you can be?”

Why would we not go there? That was a pretty fundamental thing. You would have thought they would be ahead of that. They should, as a government, have already been there. You shouldn’t have even had to have that recommendation made to you, but they did, and yet they still haven’t really implemented the ability. Again, they’re stifling debate on various bills in this House so that we cannot go out to Ontarians, the stakeholders who truly can impact the system, and allow them to have their say, to give us their expertise and wisdom so we can create the best processes that we can.

They’ve also called on the Liberal government to engage in a regulatory impact analysis. They told you that legislation like Bill 6, the Great Lakes Protection Act, is unnecessary, as existing statutes address the concerns you are claiming to address in this new bill. Nevertheless, you went ahead and introduced it. That’s one that, again, I watch fairly closely. Of course, my great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is surrounded by the Great Lakes; they have a huge impact on all of us. The Great Lakes impact all of us, but that buzzword, “how would you not want to protect,” just goes to show that they’ll use that headline and cover it up with the details later on; there’s really no benefit. Why are we creating new agencies, new unelected bodies that are going to govern something as important as the Great Lakes? I will stand here whenever I can and ensure that we go back to the grassroots, that we have the stakeholders in the room on any issue, so we’re getting the best front-line thought process, experience and successes we can to ensure that we have the best legislation possible.

As such, I think it’s key that the government define the word “burden,” instead of leaving its interpretation to the personal whim of whoever is the minister of the day. Again, we get caught up in wordsmithing here and using acronyms. What we really need is just frank, open, honest discussion. We need to ensure that we’re all in this room coming together to ensure that we develop the best legislation, the best regulation, that respects the front

lines, that respects the experts in any of their fields, regardless of whether it's agriculture, the nuclear industry, small business, child care, health care or education—it doesn't really matter. We need the people who truly are at the front lines and know their game the best.

It really would be helpful at times in this House if we could just get past some of the spin and rhetoric and truly open up. You can't say "accountability" and "transparency"—I'm going to go on about this again today whenever I can. It just smacks of—I won't say it—saying one thing and doing the absolute opposite. You can't bring a bill on MPP accountability and transparency and shut down debate to slam it through the way you want it. If you want transparency and accountability, you have to open it up to everyone to have their say. You have to have a proper process so that the people out there agree and understand and feel they've actually had the time to input and give you the thought process and shape that bill to be the best that it can be.

1530

Mr. Speaker, I could talk about that all day long, and to some people, it seems like maybe I have. I'm going to move on.

The second part of this bill deals with job creation, another sore spot for this party and this Liberal government after 11 years of mismanagement and poor calculation and, at times, just truly leading the public astray in regard to what they've said they're going to do and, at the end of the day, what they end up implementing.

They want to design, plan and organize geographic economies or so-called business clusters in different communities. At the end of the day, we need to ensure that a government is looking at all geographic regions with the ability to thrive and survive. A lot of what I've seen in my three years is very punitive to rural and northern Ontario.

I introduced the transportation bill for rural and northern Ontario. It received unanimous consent from all three parties. That resolution received it the same day I presented it, and to this day they have not called one single meeting to even discuss that.

We need those types of issues to be brought, for all three parties to discuss and find creative and innovative ways to implement solutions.

This bill gives the government the mandate to plan and consult as well as amend and revoke economic planning. Personally, I feel insecure about any bill that compels us to trust the Liberal government to organize our local economies. I stand on fact: the absolute worst debt and deficit records in our provincial history. In 10 to 11 years, they have actually doubled the debt that took the rest of the governments of our proud history in the province of Ontario to accumulate. Sadly, what we saw in the last budget, which is why I voted against it, and in the budget before that, which I voted against, is that they're continuing to overspend.

We have to have the ability to live within our means. If not, we're putting that debt on those great pages sitting in front of you. I come to this House every day because

of my two sons, Zach and Ben, who are 17 and 20, and my nephews and my nieces, and friends of my family who have children that age who are in college, who are in university, who are in public school and high school, so that we have an opportunity for them to thrive and to want to be proud to stay in Ontario, and not jump on a bus and head to the west, not head down to the States, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, that's what is really happening today as we speak.

It was interesting earlier today in question period, the way the Liberals handled some of the questions. The reason why we have so many of our classrooms empty is because there are so many families leaving this great province, because it's more prosperous in other provinces. Then they try to turn it on us and say, "Don't downplay Ontario. Don't talk down about Ontario."

Well, you know what? The reality is, if we weren't standing here for Ontario, that exodus would be even faster. We want to turn this great province around. We want to ensure that we have the ability for the next generation to have the great lifestyle that I've certainly enjoyed as a result of those who went before me.

The fact is, this government doesn't actually know how to create jobs without paying cash for them. Again, you can't continue to bribe and to tell people that we're going to pay for something when all you're doing is moving that debt forward a number of years. Again, as I said earlier today, \$21,000 is what every single child born into this province of Ontario is indebted, the day that they are brought into this great province and this great world—unfathomable.

Ontario has given 109 companies \$800 million over eight years and created only 30,000 jobs. That may sound like a big number, but put that per job, Mr. Speaker. We're the only jurisdiction, probably in the world, that pays upwards of \$140,000 per job that never seems to last. We've had examples, and I can't think of any off the top of my head right now, but there have been a number where they've handed out money to a very specific industry, only to find that that industry has left Ontario—no accountability, no recourse to have to pay that money back. They're gone, and the money is gone with them. The jobs that they proposed never ever actually found their way to stay in Ontario as permanent jobs.

The green energy sector, again with the wind turbines—they promoted 60,000 full-time jobs, I think it was going to be. I'd like them to stand in this House, just one of them, and give me the absolute black-and-white facts of where those 60,000 permanent jobs are. I just don't believe it. I don't think it's there.

Again, the 30-second sound bite: People just drive by it and, at the end of the day, take it at their word. We're telling you, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of those examples where they've said one thing and done another, and the action just doesn't stand behind them.

We have to support our small businesses. In Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, we've lost small businesses on the Liberal watch, specifically abattoirs. We lost 50% of them because of the regulatory burden that they refuse to fix.

They continually cut: \$500 million in cuts to education are a direct threat to rural schools, many of which they're targeting for closure, just as they targeted the Bluewater technology centre, which closed a few years ago. In my great riding, you take a school out of a small rural community—that's the fabric of the community. That's the heartbeat. That's the jobs. That's the factory. That's the start of a downward spiral. You can use rhetoric like, "They're half empty." That's because we're not doing things in the Liberal government to ensure that we have a thriving economy so people want to remain in rural Ontario.

I could go on and on—20 minutes certainly isn't nearly enough for me to get into a topic of this magnitude. But I'd like to just suggest that we need to ensure that we always have the ability for government to set high bars. When you've doubled the debt and doubled the deficit in 11 years and you continue to dig and overspend—to dig that hole of deficit that these young children are going to actually, at some point not too far down the road, have to come up with, that's a sad day. I'll continue to stand in this House and fight to ensure that we get back to balanced budgets.

I challenged last week and I'll challenge again: If you don't balance the budget by 2017-18 like you said you will, in the spirit of accountability and transparency, I would ask each of you to stand up that day and resign.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a pleasure being in the House to listen to someone who has become what I would like to say is a good friend. There's a lot that we have in common. He has a Ben and a Zach—a 20- and a 17-year-old?

Mr. Bill Walker: Yes.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have a Matt and a Roch, a 19- and a 16-year-old. That's why I'm here, between them and lot of people who have supported me across Algoma-Manitoulin. Each and every day that I come in here I feel the passion that you have for the good people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I have that same passion for the people of Algoma-Manitoulin. You're absolutely right: When you talk about a bill which is identified as the Better Business Climate Act—that's what it says it's going to create—is that actually what's going to materialize and what is actually going to happen for constituents and for the communities in my riding?

One of the most troubling aspects—I'll just speak on behalf of the challenges that small businesses and municipalities face. I'm going to keep my discussions about TSSA for another day. I hope I have my full 20 minutes on that one—just the fact of what they're doing across Algoma-Manitoulin, destroying communities and destroying small mom-and-pop operations. But I'll keep those comments for another day. Those will be coming.

The regulatory burdens that are imposed on small municipalities and the challenges that they have—the expensive engineers and the consultants and the environmental assessments and the applications—it just throws it on them. Put that into a northern Ontario perspective—which I know my colleague also knows from his area

because of the condensed building season, which is probably a four- to five-month window—all of this puts a heavy burden on those small municipalities.

I just wanted to congratulate the member for bringing a perspective from his area, and I look forward to bringing my own from Algoma-Manitoulin. Again, big issue, and I'm sending you a message: You guys need to deal with TSSA.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate and to pass some comments on the comments from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who comes from a great area in our province where I love to visit and watch the sunsets and spend some time in the summer when I can. We were talking about that the other day—what a wonderful place it is to go in the summer.

Today what we're talking about is Bill 7. It's the Better Business Climate Act. It's got two schedules to it: a very easy bill to understand. It requires the minister to publish an annual report on the action that the government has undertaken to reduce unnecessary government burdens and regulations.

I think all parties, at some point in their life as a government, have decided that it's time to review the impositions we sometimes place or the impositions that can build up over time on the businesses that form part of our wonderful economy. That's what schedule 1 does. It makes sense. I think it's a sensible way to move forward.

Schedule 2 supports the development of cluster growth. That is really something that I think is pretty exciting. Ontario already is doing very well in that regard. We rank number two in all of North America in the number of information, communications and technology clusters. That's led by clusters in this area here, in the GTA, but also in the great ridings of Kitchener-Waterloo and up in the Ottawa area. When you look at us financially, Toronto ranks third in North America and 11th in the entire world when it comes to our competitiveness ratings for global financial centres.

There's a lot in this bill, Speaker. It's the sort of bill we need to do. It's not about what we regulate; it's about how the regulations are actually brought into action. We understand the critical importance of cluster development, and, as the Toronto board of trade puts it very clearly, clusters collaborate, so our economy can compete.

1540

We need to pass this bill, Speaker. I look forward to further comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join in the debate and provide a few minutes of comments on Bill 7 for my friend the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who always articulates the issues of his riding. He's a very passionate advocate for his constituents, and I appreciate a lot of the things he put on the record.

In my riding of Leeds-Grenville, on Friday we had our annual Economic Development Summit for Leeds—

Grenville. It's organized in conjunction with the Leeds–Grenville economic development department; our three community futures development corporations, Thousand Islands, Grenville and Valley Heartland; also the Thousand Islands workforce development group, in addition to the economic development departments in Prescott, Gananoque and Brockville. It was a great day, a great opportunity for us to speak to job creators, new municipal politicians—a real great cross-section from Leeds and Grenville.

One of the things people talked to me about was the regulatory burden that they're feeling is increasing day after day. I mentioned to them that we have this Bill 7 before the Legislature. I talked to them about schedule 1, this Burden Reduction Reporting Act, where the minister has to—and I'll read right from the explanatory note—"publish an annual report with respect to actions taken by the government of Ontario to reduce burdens."

When I told them that, they were a bit surprised and they said, "You mean the government's not going to set any targets or goals? They've just tabled in the bill that they're going to publish a report. That doesn't seem to deal with what the real issue is."

Certainly I heard loud and clear from my constituents on Friday that they definitely wanted this government to set some priorities. So I hope that the members of our caucus who are on the committee would consider some of those amendments, to actually put in practice an actual number goal.

Those are my comments. I see I've already run out of time. I'm sure the members would let me have more—

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Actually, no, they're motioning to sit down, so I better do that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This particular bill is much ado about nothing. What is interesting is, everything that is contained in this bill—in the two schedules of the bill—the government already has the right to do, which raises the question: Why is the government bringing this to the Legislature to demand legislative time that could be used on other bills that they say are supposedly important? I think the reason is pretty simple: They're trying to send a signal to those people out there who are interested in less red tape, trying to make it look as if they're doing something, but in fact are not doing a heck of a lot that they can't do already.

The bill essentially mandates that the government should write a report about what they've done to reduce red tape on an annual basis, but at the same time in schedule 1 of the bill they're giving themselves the ability to decide when it's going to be printed, should it be printed, or should it not be printed and not have a reporting date whatsoever. Let's say the first report gets printed and they don't like what it was and they got bad press. They, by regulation, can undo the whole thing and say, "We're not doing it anymore." This is kind of laughable because the government says it's trying to be transparent, but in fact schedule 1 of the bill allows them

an escape clause if they don't like the report that has been written on the issue of red tape.

On the issue of clustering—my God, Speaker, as if government never looked at industries in a cluster when it comes to doing things. You look at the mining sector, the forestry sector, the pharmaceutical or automotive sectors, we've been doing that for years. Again, there's nothing here that cannot be done, that cabinet doesn't already have the power to do. All of the legislation the government drafts, they've delegated the authority to cabinet to do what the heck they want. So this bill, at the end of the day, is not going to do much to hurt anybody, but I would say that this is more an exercise in communications than it ever is an exercise in actually getting something done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the questions and comments. We return to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to hear from my colleagues, my good friend—and you are good friend—from Algoma–Manitowlin. We do share a lot of the same thoughts when we come to this House.

The Minister of Labour, I welcome you to Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound any time. I would welcome your chequebook as well up there, because there are some projects we're still trying to get you to spend good money on as opposed to the money that's been wasted by your government in my three years here.

My colleague from Leeds–Grenville, our House leader, does a remarkable job, and I return to him and the work that he does on behalf of his constituents in Leeds–Grenville and the leadership he provides. The member for Timmins–James Bay, as well—he stands in the House and is always articulate. Even the odd cuss word comes out, but then he retracts that and usually says so.

Mr. Speaker, what we really need in this House, if they truly want to have a jobs and growth act, is that they need to actually get some control around the energy rates. We have the highest energy rates in North America. It's driving small business, large business, big business—anyone—out of the province at record speeds. We can't have that. We can't continue to have the highest rates and expect we're going to attract and retain businesses in Ontario.

Training and apprenticeship: We've called again for apprenticeship. We have a major boom that is coming at us. A lot of seniors in the demographic will be retiring. What are we doing today to train that next wave of apprenticeships, those skilled tradespeople out there, from the mechanic to the hairdresser and across the spectrum? We don't see much happening there.

The regulatory burden: Again, a report comes in and they don't even have to publish the report that they're going to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars, typically with a consultant, probably from the US, to produce, and then they're not even going to implement. They don't even have to table it. That's unacceptable.

They also need to use funds, in my mind—rather than picking winners and losers of business, what they should be doing is things, and we've been calling for it in rural

areas like ours, like expanding the capability of broadband Internet so that all businesses have a level playing field, so everyone can compete and bring that opportunity to their community.

Things like infrastructure—roads, bridges, dredging of harbours—those types of things create employment. And commit to the nuclear industry and ensure that we have those refurbis, so we have the low rates that we need to encourage business. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed a pleasure to stand and speak on Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act, also known as An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014. It was all introduced, I believe, by the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure way back on July 7, during that wonderful summer sitting we all so very much enjoyed.

I thought long and hard about this bill, all six pages of it, Speaker, and I had a brief chance to review what some of the members have said about this bill in the debate leading up to my time here this afternoon. Listening to the members here this afternoon, I tried to understand what impact this bill would have on the businesses in my great riding of Windsor—Tecumseh and of course on the corporations that we have there, the big ones. I want to tell you a tale. It's not a tale about two cities, although I suppose I could start with the words of Mr. Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...." But that was 1775 and not today, 240 years later, in Ontario.

Let me tell you not a tale of two cities but of two neighbouring jurisdictions: Ontario and the state of Michigan. Both jurisdictions are heavily involved in the automotive industry. Reporters and other editorials at my home newspaper, the Windsor Star, spend a great deal of their time writing about the automotive industry. As you know, what you read on a daily basis can shape your opinion, especially of course around election time. So when we discuss the six-page proposed Bill 7, when we discuss partnerships and jobs and growth, let's spend a little more focus on automotive jobs and the growth potential of the automotive industry.

Here's what Michigan has done to preserve, protect and grow its automotive industry. Anne Jarvis, in a front-page story in the Windsor Star about a week and a half ago, says that Michigan is serious about the automotive industry. The governor, Rick Snyder, created an Automotive Industry Office. He appointed a very experienced automotive specialist, a special adviser, and the governor gets a monthly briefing from the special advisor on the automotive industry. Michigan, unlike Ontario, has developed a 30-year plan that capitalizes on emerging trends in vehicle design, technology and materials. It tracks drivers and the changing demographics of drivers.

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The results—and these are the results that speak to the aspirations, if you will, of Bill 7: Michigan, in the past

four years, has attracted one quarter of all automotive investment in North America. One quarter of every dollar that has been invested in North America's automotive industry has gone to the state of Michigan.

Speaker, I'm embarrassed to tell you this, but right now, Michigan assembles more vehicles than Ontario—sad but true. When Michigan saw themselves losing automotive production, losing investment, according to Tony Faria, a good friend of mine who works at the University of Windsor—he's an expert in the field; he's the co-director of the office of automotive vehicle research at the University of Windsor—Michigan drew a line in the sand. Mr. Faria says they didn't want to lose more production and investment. They fought to bring investment back. Talk about a success story.

There was a Chrysler plant in Sterling Heights that was slated to close. Instead, \$1 billion was invested. General Motors: Nearly half a billion dollars went their way, opening the possibility of a second shift at one of the plants. Michigan stamping plants benefited, plus R&D and a lightweight materials research centre.

Bill 7 can make these examples a reality in Ontario if the will is there. We can have the best of times again if we use our wisdom and don't follow a foolish path to nowhere. I know the minister will tell us that he has a plan, that the government has invested \$800 million in Ontario's automotive industry over the past 11 years. I know that the federal government has ponied up money as well.

Let me digress for a moment. In this morning's Globe and Mail there's an article by Barrie McKenna. He writes about one of the federal funds that we're talking about here. This is a fund from Ottawa's budget of a year ago, 2013. There was \$200 million set aside in the 2013 budget to spark innovation in Ontario's hard-hit manufacturing sector. That's a "best of times" kind of an announcement. But here's the "worst of times" kind of thing about that fund: From that budget in 2013, Mr. McKenna tells us, "18 months later Ottawa has yet to approve a single project from its Advanced Manufacturing Fund." That was revealed after the NDP industry critic, Peggy Nash, put forward a written question to see what the government was doing with our money.

There's no wisdom in that kind of government fund, but a lot of foolishness, if you want to ask me about it. Here's a fund, Speaker, intended to pay for large-scale transformative manufacturing activities as well as to encourage commercialization and to spur the adoption of cutting-edge technology. Some parties can talk a good game, make a headline or two, but never spend the money for what it was intended, or delay spending the money that was budgeted. Do you think the industry doesn't notice? Of course the industry notices when that sort of thing happens. You put the money in the budget but you never release it.

Getting back to what I was saying about the better plans in Michigan, neither Ontario nor Ottawa have recouped anything close to what Michigan has. The sad part of it all is that the experts, the automotive analysts, say that Ontario is being left behind. That's why this bill

is so important. This bill can be a game-changer with the right improvements. It is essential that we recognize, no matter what side of the House we're on today, that around the globe—and the auto industry is truly a global industry—auto assembly investment rose more than 9% to \$17.6 billion last year, but Canada didn't reap any of that investment, any of it.

I expect the minister will assure us that just recently, he and the Premier announced \$86 million, or 10% of the new money planned for the Honda plant in Alliston. To that I say thank you from this side of the House; thank you for that money in Alliston. But while that secures the future of that plant and the existing jobs in Alliston—and that is important; don't get me wrong—it doesn't grow the industry.

Bill 7 talks about partnerships for jobs and growth. Speaker, a short history lesson: Last spring, Chrysler Canada was in discussions with the government about growth at the Windsor assembly plant. You remember that; I'm sure you do. We all do. The former leader of the Conservative Party made headlines when he called any provincial investment at the Windsor plant “corporate welfare.” That prompted Chrysler's Sergio Marchionne to walk away from those discussions, saying they had become a political football and he wanted no part of it.

The scary thing about that experience is the warning of Mr. Marchionne, who, by the way, is one of the most highly regarded, respected visionaries in the automotive industry today. In walking away from those discussions about the provincial partnership with the long-term growth plan for the Windsor assembly plant, Mr. Marchionne said Ontario and Canada have to decide if they want to be part of the global auto industry in the future. He said—these are his words, words to heed, words to take to heart—that we, the Ontario government and the feds in Ottawa, don't appear to be working hard to attract investment.

I find that a very scary indictment, Speaker. We have a short-term investment plan for the Windsor assembly plant, but because of the way that deal was bungled, there is no long-term plan, no 30-year plan like they have in Michigan. That should scare us all.

The Michigan plan created a one-stop office to cut the red tape, to assist industry investors to navigate the myriad of government agencies and regulators. It established another Michigan priority: expanding the skilled trades base through education and training, so that when the new plants relocate to Michigan, the skilled talent is there to fill the jobs.

This was a really good article by Anne Jarvis. I think the ministry staff should check it out if they haven't already done so.

I know that some skeptics on the other side may well say, “We can't compete with jurisdictions, especially those in Mexico and some of the southern states, because of the incentives they throw at the feet of industry decision-makers.” But Ontario and Michigan have other attributes, other advantages: having the right talent, the skilled workforce, the engineers; having the right supply

chain; being geographically located. These are all highly rated, as well as what could be improved in this bill.

The minister has the ability. His hand is on the button. He can press that button. He can improve this bill. He can save the Ontario automotive industry. Instead of sitting on that button, he can get off his button and make amendments to Bill 7 and get Ontario's automotive industry back on track. Indeed, Ontario's manufacturing industry can be put back on the rails.

We need a real policy, a made-in-Ontario automotive strategy. We need a made-in-Canada automotive policy, but if Ottawa won't lead, then Ottawa should follow or get out of the way and let Ontario take over. Let Ontario restore to greatness our manufacturing industry, our automotive industry. It's within this bill to make that happen if, and only if, the Liberal government will follow Michigan's example and get serious about a 30-year plan. The government can say they have a plan. The minister can tell us again about his dedicated automotive unit and about its staff dedicated to attracting foreign investments, about the \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund and the southwest development fund. But, Speaker, where are the jobs? Where's the future growth? And where are the results—the determination?

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Mr. Marchionne doesn't think much of what Ontario brings to the table, what Canada brings to the table. This is a global industry. We need visionaries. We need people to think outside of the box. In an editorial on November 15, the Windsor Star concluded, “Whatever fuzzy, inarticulated game plan Ottawa and Queen's Park claim to have isn't working. Just ask Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne, who basically said our country lacked an understanding and sophistication when it came to the global auto sector in the 21st century. Either get in the game or get lost. And rightly so.” That editorial went on to suggest that we should follow Michigan's example and hire an auto czar, someone with personality and energy who knows the industry and can work the room.

It needs to draft legislation that gets more people trained in the skilled trades that are required or will be required in the future. It needs to do more on the supply side of the automotive question. Bill 7 doesn't do that.

Let's do more. Let's dream bigger, or higher. Let's work together to improve this legislation. It is a good start. It will certainly be supported on this side of the House, but let's be more creative. Our taxpayers deserve nothing less. We have to do more to secure a better future for our manufacturing industry and the people who work in those fields. These are good, well-paying jobs, the kind we need to protect and preserve, and to grow, to give us hope for a better future, to set the bar higher for the next generation. We can't sit back and allow our manufacturing base to slip away piece by piece, plant by plant, cluster by cluster.

This bill speaks to the development of clusters. But without more planning, without a long-term strategy, this could be cluster's last stand.

Interjections.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I had to say it. Thank you for that reaction. I expected nothing less.

It's a very serious piece of legislation that could do much better. It could set the stage for a real automotive strategy, a real manufacturing policy—not just a paper tiger plan to say, “We have an app for that,” but a workable blueprint for prosperity in Ontario. It could be something we all could be proud of, no matter what side of the House we're on, no matter what region of the province we come from, no matter for whom we speak when we stand on the floor of this great institution.

Speaker, our time is running out. We need action, and we need it now. We cannot afford to lose one more manufacturing job in the province of Ontario. We need to formulate a legislative policy that protects what we have, that attracts the attention of the industry decision-makers and that convinces them, “Yes, indeed, Ontario has turned the corner.”

We wish to be a player. We understand the needs of the industry, this global automotive industry. We wish to be a full partner in securing the future of Ontario's manufacturing sector. We need to stand on the rooftops and make our voices heard: Ontario gets it—finally. We will bring forth the incentives. We will secure the jobs. We will invest in Ontario's future. We believe in the automotive industry, and we will compete in the 21st century. We will show those around the globe that have been winning the competitions up till now that the gloves are off, it's game on in Ontario, and we're in it to win it. The bill speaks to the beginning of that, Speaker, but it doesn't go far enough.

We can't deny that talking about reducing red tape for business is a good thing, and developing clusters, as I've mentioned. But I will say—and hopefully the government is listening—that once this bill makes its way to the legislative committee process, the bill should be fully discussed in more detail and proper consultations should be held around the province in the various regions, in the manufacturing regions.

We should have committee hearings in Windsor, in London, in St. Thomas, in St. Catharines, in Oshawa. We should have them across the province. If this bill is going to have the effect on business that the government thinks it will, then I say we should be taking feedback from those who live and breathe the world of business every day.

I hope the government is prepared to have a proper consultation period, not like the time-allocated consultation that has been happening to some of the other bills in this session of Parliament.

I'm not a business person, but I've dealt directly with business people for a long, long time and I listen to what they have to say. They say that there's a lot of red tape that can be cut, a lot of process that can be trimmed. I think that the people who put those kinds of hours into their business deserve to be listened to, and to do that, you have to get away from Queen's Park, out of this bubble, and go listen to what people in Ontario are saying.

Speaker, just as I wrap up, I want to thank you again for listening. I thank the voters in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh for sending me here to bring their voice to this floor, and I hope today that voice has been heard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to commend the member for his time in this debate.

I'm going to have a chance a little bit later to speak to this in more detail, but it is truly remarkable, how this bill actually does nothing that the government can't already do.

There are two sections in this bill. The first one talks about the need to be able to diminish the regulatory burden. Well, as we all know, the government already has the ability to do that. Government is the one who makes regulations at cabinet. That authority has been delegated to cabinet by this Legislature. So the government can change any regulation it wants, because they're the ones who drafted the regulation and they can be the ones who un-draft the regulation or get rid of it or amend it.

As for the issue of clusters, nobody disagrees—and I think the member from Windsor–Tecumseh makes a good point—that we need to have a very strong approach to how we deal with various sectors of our economy and various geographic areas of our province, to be able to stimulate growth and get the investment we need to create the jobs that are necessary in our economies.

But tell me what in this bill the government doesn't already have the ability to do. The government has been there, what, for 12 years? They've allowed how many closures of how many car plants in southern Ontario, how many saw mills, how many paper mills, how many pulp mills? How many of everything has shut down? And the government, all that time, has had the authority to do what's in this bill, yet all those places have shut down.

So why does the government come into this House with this bill, if nothing other than they want to be able to have a communication exercise to say, “Listen, I'm doing something for you”? Let it be known that there's nothing in this bill that the government can't do already.

This is akin to the government filibustering its own legislative time in the Legislature on its own. I would call it “tactics” of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Daïene Vernière: I'm very pleased to speak to you today on Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act. This legislation is going to show that our government is working with key stakeholders to continue growing Ontario's economy, and we want to do this with cluster developments and by reducing the burden of running a business in Ontario.

We have heard some of the members complain about the business climate in Ontario. I just want to share with you some personal observations.

I have a son who graduated at the height of the recession with a degree in computer and video game design.

He was actually looking at leaving Ontario but decided to stay here because he wandered into Kitchener's Communitech Hub. This is our tech cluster, which could easily be followed elsewhere in Ontario. There, he received some mentoring and some training. He was connected with some angel investors. This facility is supported by our government. His company now has 25 employees.

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He has an office also in California. He has the option of packing up and going there and living and working there full-time. But he chooses to stay in Ontario. He likes the low tax rate here. He likes the pool of talent that he can get here. He also likes the positive business environment that is being provided by our government.

We heard some members across the floor state that it was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Maybe it just was not a good time to push for an election, because the fact is that here in Ontario, we have an excellent business environment. In my family, I see people actually taking advantage of this. I'm very proud of how well he is doing.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to stress that we understand that creating a successful business climate means reducing unnecessary regulations and practices and that we are very committed to establishing and maintaining these cluster developments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to make comment on the member for Windsor-Tecumseh's—

Interjection: The fine member he is.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The fine member that he is—his comments on Bill 7. It says An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act. Again, fancy titles—what do they really do?

The member from Windsor spoke passionately about his part of Ontario and the need for an auto sector strategy that actually keeps jobs. I heard the Liberals say over there that it's the best climate in Ontario. Then why did we lose over 300,000 manufacturing jobs? They haven't come back. Why are so many of the industry groups and the trades fighting the College of Trades? They say that there's less burden. There's actually more burden than before.

It says that the definition of burden is by the interpretation of the minister. Well, this government's ministries add more barriers, the College of Trades being one. They're going to increase the number of industries affected by the College of Trades. That's more tax burden on those employers.

You know what? The west has won. The people in Ontario are going west. The young people are going west.

The highest hydro rates in North America, the highest business taxes in the province, the highest amount of debt—when you add all the other provinces together, it's still the highest amount of debt and deficit. That doesn't make people want to come and set up business in

Ontario. I don't know what part they aren't getting. And they certainly aren't staying.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Why is everyone moving west, then, if things are so great in Ontario, as you say? You don't know people are moving west? The west has won the battle of the young people. They are taking our young people out west to get jobs because there are not any here, and it is largely due to this Liberal government.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I see this is a lively debate today, which is a good thing. Maybe that's one of the reasons we shouldn't time-allocate bills: because people do have things they want to contribute to debates on both sides of the House. It actually only makes democratic sense to allow debate to continue until members don't have any feedback on some of the fancy-titled bills that you bring forward. Sometimes, really, they're not all they're cracked up to be, in the action of the titles—that they're produced.

I want to just add my comments to this bill because it does talk about, in a short version of the original bill that has been printed—it's called the Better Business Climate Act. We definitely need better incentives for business to create jobs.

I don't know if this will be the answer to that question, but I can tell you, in the riding of London-Fanshawe, we have had the highest unemployment rate for a very long time. I know the member from London West talked about it. Recently, she asked a question. It had gone up 1% last month. We need job creation to be for good-paying jobs, jobs that are going to have benefits, jobs that are going to allow a family to be sustainable on that income—single parents, double-income families.

The member from Windsor West made a good point about manufacturing—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor-Tecumseh.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Excuse me, Windsor-Tecumseh. I correct the record on that.

Things that the government can do to spur job creation: Incentivizing jobs coming to southwestern Ontario, as he talked about Chrysler, is a step forward. It is a little disappointing, however, that the member from the Conservative Party talked about it being corporate welfare and, in effect, kind of sidelined the prospect of that happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Windsor-Tecumseh for his reply.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to thank the members from Timmins-James Bay, Kitchener Centre, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and London-Fanshawe.

To my friend from Kitchener Centre, we have mutual friends in the media, but when she said that perhaps the timing wasn't right for an election, I get a kick out of that because if we didn't have the election, the member wouldn't be here today. It goes both ways.

But we do need the government of Ontario to develop a real provincial automotive strategy. I continue to hear from people—especially in my area, from people who work in the plants—that we need a coordinated provincial automotive strategy, something we’d tie in if Ottawa ever gets a real one as well. They’ve done it in Michigan, and Michigan’s approach to aggressively chase and secure auto investment is certainly paying off in their jurisdiction.

When we talk about a plan for Ontario—I talked about editorials in the Windsor Star, my hometown newspaper. I believe they had it right on when they said what Ontario has “doesn’t sound like a strategy. It sounds like an afterthought. Folding the auto industry—worth tens of billions of dollars in Ontario alone—into a ministry that handles any and all ideas is hardly what we’d call a blueprint for success. Especially when we compare it to the focused approach Michigan has taken under the leadership of Governor Rick Snyder, who last year created the Michigan Automotive Office.”

I leave the debate with this, Speaker: We need to do more. We need to be dynamic and quick to change, like our competition, and when things aren’t working we need to bring about the right changes. Hopefully this bill will be effective and do something. I just think we do things too fragmented and we need a real strategy, a strategy that lays out the plan and the details, so please, give us those details.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I was patiently waiting for the official government side members to participate in their own bill. I find it very odd that they don’t have any interest in defending the value of Bill 7. However, on behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon, I’m pleased to participate in this debate.

I was scanning the explanatory notes and the schedules in Bill 7. There are two schedules in Bill 7. I have to say, Speaker, not to be rude, but there’s an awful lot of wiggle room in this bill. I call them “wiggle words.” When I ask my daughter to clean up her bedroom, I don’t say that I would consider it advisable; I say, “Thou shalt.” There are a lot of words like “if” this act requires; the minister “may” consider it advisable; “if” the plan is continued; and “if” the minister prepares a plan. I particularly like this one in schedule 2, where it talks about subsequent reviews of the plan:

“If a plan is continued, the minister shall, on or before the fifth anniversary of the day that the report stating that the plan is being continued is made public, conduct a review of the plan for the purpose of evaluating whether the objectives and intended outcomes of the plan have been achieved by,

“(a) consulting with persons or entities who have an interest in the development of the cluster.”

I have to say, on the day that we have just debated yet another closure motion on yet another all-important piece of government legislation, it’s a bit rich to be talking about “they must consult.”

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This Bill 7 has got some interesting words, very little action and very little meat, for lack of a better word. Bill 7 is supposed to talk about the Better Business Climate Act. How appropriate that we’re doing this today, because earlier today I met with the Ontario Real Estate Association, and as our meeting was concluding, David Grime and Jenny Anderson—thank you very much for driving all the way from Dufferin to have a meeting with me here at Queen’s Park—talked about what they need to see from their government to make Ontario better and to make their industry thrive. We got to talking about the value and the importance of jobs and industry.

On the one hand, it’s nice that the government has brought forward a bill. It is just very unfortunate that there is not a lot of meat in it. The success of our economy is tied to that success. We all remember the disastrous global economic recession that occurred not too long ago. Countries that believed they wouldn’t be touched by the recession were hit harder than expected. Ontario, of course, was hit hard and I would suggest to you is still recovering. Ontario’s economy went into a recession and has since then never been able to rekindle its past productivity.

Our federal government counterpart has done a good job in protecting our country’s economy. That is why they will balance the budget, and have a surplus, I might add. This government has not done enough to promote our province’s economy. Rather, I believe they’ve made it worse. The policies of this government have decimated Ontario’s manufacturing jobs. Over the last decade, the province lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. My own riding of Dufferin-Caledon has been adversely affected by the rising energy rates in our province. A company in my riding notified me earlier this fall that their energy bill for one month—one month—came to a total of \$37,802.41. That’s absurd. Only under this government’s watch would we have the highest energy rates in all of North America. If we don’t understand that high energy costs impact businesses’ ability to thrive and to choose where they want to do business, then we’re not paying attention.

Let’s put that into perspective for a moment. Back in 2003, Ontario’s energy rates were 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. Now it’s more than 15 cents per kilowatt hour on average. In addition, the average price paid by large industrial power users is 4.8 cents in Montreal, 5.45 cents in Chicago and 8.12 cents in Detroit.

Part of having a competitive business climate includes having competitive energy prices. The two must go hand in hand. You cannot expect a company to thrive if they are paying exorbitant energy costs and their competition pays a quarter of that on their energy. Unfortunately, this government has not come to that realization. That’s why this government has said energy rates will continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

Speaker, I’d like to discuss the purpose of Bill 7. Bill 7 was brought forward to help improve Ontario’s economy through the reduction of red tape and through

the development of geographic economic clusters. I will speak about the second portion of the bill soon enough.

This government loves to boast that they like to eliminate regulatory burdens. The fact of the matter is they're not doing a very good job. Government red tape is one of the primary causes for the destruction of Ontario's manufacturing sector and for the overall stagnation of the province's economy. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that government red tape costs Ontario businesses \$11 billion a year. This is a staggering amount. That's time and money that could be spent on small, medium-sized and large businesses hiring more employees, branching out to new sectors and helping spur innovation. Instead, what employees are spending their time on is filling out yet more government paperwork.

The CFIB also noted that government red tape is the second-largest concern for businesses. Too often, we've heard story after story of companies leaving Ontario because the business climate is no longer sustainable under this government's watch. What is even sadder is the fact that many workers who have lost their jobs when companies have either gone bankrupt or left are now moving from this province to others like Alberta, where their business climate is welcoming to industry.

This government has no credible solution to stimulating job growth and attracting new business investments. In the past eight years, this government has spent more than three quarters of a billion dollars in the name of job creation. In this year's budget, the government introduced the creation of a \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. Will it make a difference? This government thinks picking and choosing winner-and-loser companies will make them want to do business in Ontario.

But there's no logic to this. This government continues to live in a fairy tale. They believe continuous spending will result in economic job stimulation. Just look at what we heard from the Auditor General recently in her study of the reopening of teachers' contracts. It mentioned that we spent half a billion dollars to solve one issue. Where did that money come from? That came out of a tax system that is already overburdened.

This government doesn't even pretend to balance the budget. Just look at last week's fall economic statement. This government's revenue projections were completely wrong. They missed the mark by half a billion dollars. As a result, they lowered the revenue projections for the next three years compared to what they initially said in this summer's budget, which was only three months ago.

Based on this government's own calculations, the province's GDP growth has stagnated and will remain at 2.4% for the next three years, yet this government continues to tell us they'll be able to balance the budget by 2017-18, even though they've missed every deadline so far.

The government also claims that the economic outlook is improving, but Ontario's fiscal outlook is worse than it was 12 months ago, with larger deficits expected over the next two years compared to the projections in the 2013

fall economic statement. In fact, the government's economic projections for this year and every year through 2017 have been lowered from those in the 2014 budget passed just four months ago.

The Bank of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have all provided evidence that the government's path is unsustainable. The chamber's recent report concluded that Ontario will not grow its way out of debt, but I ask this government: How will they balance the budget when revenue projections continue to go down? The answer? Pretty simple: They intend to increase taxes.

In the fall economic statement, they said that "should economic conditions persist that result in the province's revenue outlook falling further below the 2014 budget projection, the government will consider other tools, as necessary." This government loves using phrases like "other tools" as a euphemism for taxes.

This government does not have a grasp on the everyday life of Ontario residents. The average Ontarian cannot afford any more tax increases. They already have to pay for our province's debt and high energy costs. The total cost of servicing the debt, paying the interest, was \$12.6 billion. This is the third-highest expense behind health care and education. Ontario's debt is larger than the debt of all of the other provinces combined. What is also interesting is even while admitting to considering increasing taxes, they also claim, "This would be done while continuing to make critical investments in the programs and services that people depend on, such as health and education." I don't think that's happening, Speaker.

Numerous CCACs and hospitals are reporting operating deficits across the province. This has led to cuts at the Erie St. Clair CCAC, the closing of the Leamington obstetrics unit, poor service at the Champlain CCAC and the layoff of 40 workers at Timmins and District Hospital.

The president of the Ontario Nurses' Association has said that the government has laid off 1,600 nurses in the past number of years. What's ironic—no, it's not ironic; it's frustrating—is that executives at CCACs have experienced salary raises. Earlier this month, I questioned the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on the Central West CCAC's decision to limit the number of new patients it helps due to its supposed lack of funds while their CEO was given a \$24,000 increase on her salary in 2013, which brings her salary to \$267,333.47 a year. But they can't provide service.

1630

This government wants to talk about improving health care. Well, a good start would be to prioritize front-line care over executive compensation at the CCAC. We shouldn't be increasing executive salaries at CCACs when people like my 87-year-old constituent, who suffered a severe heart attack, was refused access to a personal care support worker. Instead, his daughter was expected to care for him. But she, too, has physical ailments that limit her capacity to care for her dad. There are many more cases like this that I hear about in Dufferin-Caledon.

Health care should not be about giving out hefty raises to bureaucrats. It is about funding front-line care that all Ontarians deserve. That is why front-line health care should be the number one priority of CCACs. My constituents expect their tax dollars to go to services that matter most to them, and if they only knew that their hard-earned money is going toward executive bureaucratic salaries instead of front-line care, they'd get very angry. This government can continue to claim they will make investments in health care, but we all know that's not true at the front line.

I also want to mention this government's hypocrisy when they say they will make investments in education. We just found out that this government plans to cut half a billion dollars—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary remark. I haven't been allowing it this afternoon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I withdraw. I don't think I've ever had to do that, Speaker. My apologies.

However, that doesn't take away from the facts, and the facts are that this government plans to cut half a billion dollars from education funding. This will inevitably mean school closures—school closures in areas where you would need to travel longer distances to get to the next school. We would be putting an unnecessary burden on our system and on our parents to transport their children to further schools because their government decided to close the local school. Once again, Speaker, this government can continue to claim they will make investments into essential services, but we all know that has proven not to be the case.

This government believes they will be able to find \$700 million by tackling the province's underground economy. It sounds like a good idea. They boast about tackling contraband tobacco and tax avoiders, but the fact of the matter is, they can't even track individuals who are released on bail and have already broken the law. I asked the Attorney General if they tracked those released on bail. Unfortunately, her answer was no. How can this government expect to get their finances in order when they can't even track the criminals they've already caught? This government is incapable of leading this province to success.

We once were the backbone of this country's economy. But under this government's watch, we have become a have-not province. I want to emphasize this because it's not about pride, it's about our ability to take our resources, to take our excellent manpower and put it into manufacturing and building Ontario. We don't have to rely on other people's help to pay for essential services that our citizens have come to expect. Now, we have become the reverse. We are the ones asking for money from the federal government. This government continues to complain that the federal government is not doing enough for Ontario. What this government fails to mention is that their own public accounts documents show they received \$600 million more from Ottawa last year than the previous years. This government needs to

stop blaming others for the mess they've created. This government needs to take some responsibility.

Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes discussing the various clauses of Bill 7. The first part of Bill 7 requires the minister to publish an annual report on what the government is doing to reduce unnecessary regulations, or as we like to call it, tax burdens. In addition, part 1 of the bill sets out that the minister will have the power to make regulations with respect to the report which may include regulations "specifying any actions to reduce burdens that must be referred to in the report" and "prescribing the manner in which the minister must evaluate, quantify or describe actions of the government."

I've spoken about this before. Regulations, to me, are very concerning, because all it takes is two signatures from cabinet ministers. It doesn't even have to have a debate or a discussion at the cabinet table, let alone, a public debate, that is Hansard here in this chamber, or a public forum at a committee where members of the public or impacted individuals can talk about their concerns. Regulations have the ability to change the intent of legislation within days. It's the worst way to govern, because you govern by stealth. You can pass a bill that sounds very nice—Better Business Climate Act sounds pretty harmless, sounds like a good idea—and then the regulations can change the entire intention of what we thought we were debating and discussing here in this chamber. I've talked about it before.

In this small, six-page bill, regulations are mentioned, I think, half a dozen times. So if you think, as a member of the public, that by reading this piece of proposed legislation you know the intent of the bill, you don't, because you have to wait until you see the regulations, and the only time you get to see the regulations is after they are passed. So it is very concerning to me.

I spoke about it at the beginning of my debate. There's nothing in this bill that compels the government to take the requisite action to crack down on unnecessary burdens. The government doesn't need Bill 7 to ensure that we are open for business here in Ontario. What they need is ministers who get the importance of manufacturing, who understand the value of what we need to create jobs and have a proper business climate in Ontario. They don't need it through legislation. What we need to do is have ministers who are doing their jobs proactively, going out and seeking out new businesses.

I'm sure everyone here does it in their own riding. When a business is interested in siting in and opening up in Dufferin-Caledon, I absolutely talk to them. I talk to them about the opportunities. I talk to them about the business climate that happens in Dufferin-Caledon—the job market, what our unemployment rate is, what our hydro rates are—so that they have all the information they need to make the choice to site their business here in my riding, in Dufferin-Caledon. I'm sure we all do that. The minister should be doing that at a macro level across Ontario. He or she certainly doesn't need Bill 7 to accomplish that.

I think I will leave it at that. There are all kinds of improvements that can happen in committee, not the least of which is to take out some of those wiggle words like “may” and “if,” and actually make this legislation something that we can be proud of and that we can point to for new businesses that want to site in Ontario and actually make a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I enjoyed listening to the member's contributions to the debate for Bill 7, the better business climate bill. But she makes very a good point, that those wiggle words need to be pinned down. Quit wiggling around. If this bill is going to be effective, “shall” and “if” aren't going to make changes to what they're proposing. They need to say “should” and “would,” not the wiggle words that the member talked about.

Also, Speaker, there's a word in there called “clusters.” This bill addresses that the government wants to work with clusters in certain regions and areas of Ontario. But we already have these clusters that are formed—unique; sometimes in two cities. In London, in effect, we have manufacturing clusters. We have a very up-and-coming digital technology enterprise that's growing in London. I'd like to know a little bit more about how this government defines what their role is in the cluster portion of this bill.

Also, the member from Timmins—James Bay makes a very good point, that this bill is already—in effect, the information in it is already being done, because the government can make changes to regulations. Regulations don't come before the House, so they have the power to make those changes without legislating this particular bill.

When it goes to committee, I'll be really interested to hear how businesses find that this will be a helpful tool going forward in job creation and making it a better business climate. I look forward to that and hope that businesses will have that information in their deputations to actually make this bill stronger and move us forward into a better business climate for the growth of jobs.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to be able to put my two minutes' worth into this debate.

I was so happy to hear the member from Dufferin—Caledon speak about the fact that Ontario was hammered exceptionally hard in 2007-08 as part of the global recession. I think we've done a lot of things to move this province ahead. Job numbers tell us that we're definitely moving in the right direction.

So much of that recession was beyond the control of this province. I think, given the discussions that have been ongoing over the past few months, Ontario really feels that it's on its own, trying to move forward. Our finance minister made the point recently that Ontario puts \$11 billion into the national treasury that it does not see back. And \$1 billion or \$2 billion back would go a long

way to helping not only with our marketing but all sorts of different areas of government.

With regard to Bill 7, though, since 2008 the government has eliminated 17% of all regulatory requirements. That's 80,000 regulatory burdens. The new burden reduction strategy will save over \$100 million by 2016-17. That's not small potatoes.

Right now, Toronto ranks third in North America and 11th globally in competitiveness ratings for global financial centres. Ontario ranks number two in North America in information, communications and technology companies, led by clusters in the GTA, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Ottawa.

I think the legislation is a clear reflection that our government is working with key stakeholders to continue to grow Ontario's economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm really not sure just where to start here. I'd love to have more time. I've only got two minutes.

They talk about the federal government giving them an extra billion or two to spend on marketing. Any more money that is given to them, they would likely waste it, like we've seen over the last 11 years. I mean, \$1.1 billion on a power plant or two to not generate a kilowatt of electricity will be the legacy of this government for years to come.

I go back to the fact that Barack Obama spent a billion dollars to get elected, through private sector donations and perhaps public contributions etc. They spent \$1.1 billion to get a few Liberals elected.

Anyway, this act, Bill 7, this burden reduction act: As a private member, when I first got to this House, I tabled a bill called the Transparency in Government Bills Act. I believe, if I can recall, that they voted against it. But that would be forcing the government to do a cost-benefit analysis on government legislation that would provide insight to all stakeholders, not just those who are the insiders, to actually see the costs of legislation this government is bringing forward—a variety of costs. What are the environmental costs, the health costs, the true financial costs?

We can all remember the Auditor General referenced in his report—when the Liberals brought in their Green Energy Act, he said that in other jurisdictions, when they did similar things, jobs were lost through the implementation of such an act as the Green Energy Act, because they simply didn't do their due diligence.

A lot of this can be done in regulation. I'd love to have more time. I only have 10 seconds, of course, but again, I just don't know where to start with this. It's an unnecessary piece of legislation. They talk about consulting the stakeholders, who seem to like it, but there are too many that are simply just gone from the province to even speak with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Indeed, it's a pleasure to speak to the comments made by the member from Dufferin—

Caledon. It's always a pleasure to listen to her in this House. She brings much passion to her role as a people's representative.

If I can tell a story out of school, Speaker, from my perch up here in the back row, I can see the member's desk. I see she has a photograph of her family on her desk, and she does that because when she gets agitated at something the government has done, I've seen her look at the photograph and try to calm herself down. It doesn't always work, I'll tell you—she can heckle with the best of them—but she does make an effort.

I liked the part of her speech where she said that the people of Ontario can't afford any more taxes. I think she's right on that. She talked about cuts in health care. We heard the Minister of Health say today that he's not making any cuts to the CCAC in Windsor. Yet the CCAC in Windsor is running a \$4-million to \$5-million deficit and making all kinds of cuts. I don't know who's calling the shots—who's running the show—but I know there are definitely cuts in the health care system at the CCAC in Windsor.

When I was elected, a friend of mine, Paul Couvion, from the west side of Windsor gave me a bunch of red tape—rolls of red tape. I was going to bring in a roll for the minister, but I was told it would be unparliamentary, so I can't give him the tape and the scissors. But it begs the question, if you've been there for 12 years and you've created some of this red tape and lived with it for 12 years, why now? I guess it's never too late to do the right thing. But saying you're going to cut the red tape you helped to create is a little bit like trying to close the barn door after the horse is gone.

Having said that, Speaker, I think the bill is a good first step. I think it can be improved. I hope we have time to talk about it. I hope we have time to take it out on the road and improve it out in our regions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments.

We return to the member for Dufferin—Caledon for her response.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: To the member from London—Fanshawe, thank you very much for your kind remarks.

Newmarket—Aurora, listen, I'm thrilled that you participated in a two-minute hit, because your colleagues have chosen not to defend Bill 7 during this afternoon's debate, which I think is terribly unfortunate. So thank you for participating in at least two minutes.

To my ably excellent colleague the member for Kitchener—Conestoga and the member from Windsor—Tecumseh, thank you.

I guess I would just like to remind people that there's a reason we debate, there's a reason we participate in this process, and there's a reason, quite frankly, that the process needs to include public participation and committee work, because that's where the amendments happen. We, the 107 members who sit in this chamber, don't have a lock on all the good ideas. We need to make sure that our citizens, our people, our job creators, our people who are struggling, who understand what is happening on the

ground in Windsor, in London, in Dufferin, in Kitchener, get a chance to participate and say, "I have an idea. I think this can make this bill better." We need to make sure those voices are heard.

I will close by saying this bill is not perfect; it's far from it. There are amendments that could be made that would improve it, that would actually give direction to the minister currently and any subsequent minister, and we need to make sure that happens at committee and that the amendments come forward and are passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I was up all weekend, excited, just waiting to get into this debate, because, oh my God, this was going to be earth-shattering, unbelievable. It must have taken them all of about two minutes to print this bill when they put it together. It has got voluminous parts—oh, it's only two schedules—and I want to go through it. I've got to tell you I was so excited; I was going to write a speech. But I thought, "You know what? I think I'll just ad lib it, because there's not a heck of a lot in here to write a speech about."

So let me go through this. But first of all, before I go there, what's interesting is that the government is not participating in this debate. If the government was really, truly excited about this bill, you'd think the members of the government would be up on their feet talking about this and, more importantly, saying to the opposition, "Let's get this out of the House so we can get it into committee and actually go out there and do the work that has to be done to make sure these two schedules of the bill get done in such a way that is the best possible for our economy and the people of Ontario." But, Mr. Speaker, they're not even doing that. I would be somewhat remiss, if I was a government member, to participate in this debate, especially if I had read it, because there is nothing in this bill the government can't do now.

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Let me explain why. The government, for years now—and this didn't start under a Liberal administration. I want to be clear. I want to be nonpartisan on this point. Governments over the last 20 years have started to delegate the gist of bills, when it comes to regulation, to cabinet. It used to be, when I was first elected here, that a government would draft a bill and very little of the regulation was left to cabinet. In fact, everything was pretty well spelled out in the bill. It would say, "The minister has the power..." It would say, "The minister shall do the following." It wouldn't say, "The minister may ..." but "the minister shall do the following in the prescribed manner of the bill." All of the nuts and bolts of how legislation works were actually designed right into the bill.

The reason we did that, Mr. Speaker, was really simple. You remember. You were a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young member. Do you remember that, 1990, when we both came in that class? We were all excited. We came into this Legislature. But the reason that gov-

ernments did that is because we wanted to make sure that the legislation that we draft—

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What is going on in this building?

Interjection: It's like a windstorm.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There's a windstorm that almost blew the windows out.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins–James Bay has the floor. I can hear him fine.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All right, but we're not going to end up in Kansas, are we? I don't want to wake up and be in Kansas with a pair of slippers on, looking for some guy by the name of the Wizard of Oz. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

I just say, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, when we first were elected in this place—

Interjection: And your name is Dorothy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What is the name of the dog? Toto? Where's Toto when I need him?

Anyways, when we first got elected in this place, the reason that we would not delegate the authority to write regulations to the minister was that we wanted to make sure what was done was actually going to be done in a manner that the Legislature had decided and had voted on.

I used, the other day, the example, Mr. Speaker, about when you were in government under Mike Harris. I can use his name now because he's no longer a member. When Mike Harris was the Premier here in Ontario, he drafted a bill—and you remember, Speaker, because we all voted in favour of it—that said no municipality could start a casino unless there was a referendum. It was a pretty good bill. We accepted it. Fortunately, because we got into the mode of leaving everything to regulation, Premier Harris delegated the authority on how that bill worked to cabinet.

And then what happened, Mr. Speaker? It turned out that the government under Mr. McGuinty changed the regulations in the bill so that you didn't have to have a referendum. So where the House had proclaimed itself to have a referendum, the government took away that right just simply by regulation, and they were allowed to do that because everything was delegated to regulation.

This is the point of this bill. This bill does two things. It deals with Schedule 1, which says, "The minister shall make available to the public an annual report with respect to actions taken by the government of Ontario to reduce burdens."

"Burden" is described in the act under section 1: "Burden" means a cost that may be measured in terms of money, time or resources and is considered by the minister in consultation with other members of the government—meaning cabinet—"of Ontario to be unnecessary to achieve the purpose of the statutory, regulatory procedural, administrative or other requirement that creates the cost"—*fardeau fiscal*, as we say in French, or *fardeau administratif*.

The point is, the government already has that right. The government, because we delegated the authority to cabinet, can do this already. So the government doesn't need the permission of this Legislature to say, "Oh, there's a regulation somewhere that we can change in order to make it that, yes, we protect the environment; yes, we protect health and safety of workers; yes, we protect the rights of the citizen; but we can do it in a smarter way that is less burdensome to business." The government could do it now. Why do they need a bill to do this?

Here's what's really interesting. It says, under section 3 of schedule 1, "The minister may make regulations respecting the report, which may include regulations,

"(a) specifying any actions to reduce burdens that must be referred to in the report;

"(b) prescribing the manner in which the minister must evaluate, quantify or describe actions of the government...;

"(c)"—this is the important one—"prescribing a date for the purpose of clause 2(2)(b)."

So the government, by its own power that they're giving themselves in the bill, can choose or choose not to do what is spelled out in the bill, something that they already have the authority to do in the first place and that they don't need a bill to get done. Did you follow that? That was pretty interesting, the way that I pulled all that together.

My point is, all this does is say the government shall draft a report, the minister will decide what's in the report, the minister will decide how the report is written, and the minister will decide when the report is to be published on what they've done to lessen the burden on businesses when it comes to regulation. Well, you hardly need a bill to do that. So you've got to ask yourself the question, why is the government doing this?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Why is the government doing this?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, it's an exercise in public relations. That's what this is all about. The government knows that there is, quite frankly, a huge problem for them politically in this province. A majority of Ontarians in the last election didn't vote Liberal, if the government hadn't noticed that. Our first-past-the-post British parliamentary system gave them a majority, but it wasn't the majority of Ontarians.

One thing that people don't like about this government is that they're not exactly enthused—*excités*—in regard to their ability to create a strong economy and create jobs. In fact, it's quite the opposite.

I think people in Windsor have a real problem understanding why the government doesn't take stronger action and more decisive action on creating jobs in the auto sector. If you live in London, what is the government doing? How many jobs have you lost in London over the last while? If you live up in northern Ontario, where my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin and I come from, there is a litany of job losses across the north that

people are upset about. If you live in Cornwall, I'm sure it's the same.

Mr. Steve Clark: Brockville.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Brockville; I thought it was Cornwall. To the member from—

Mr. Steve Clark: Leeds—Grenville.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Leeds—Grenville. Don't cover that up with your Christmas card. I just want to make an advertisement. Steve will be putting out his Christmas cards soon, and I've got one coming, so I really, really appreciate it.

I got away with that because the Speaker wasn't watching me.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: He's still not.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's still not. He missed it. Nothing, Speaker. It's okay.

But my point is, in schedule 1 the government is giving themselves the power to write a report, which they can already do now if they so choose. In the bill the government is not only giving themselves the power to write a report, which they already have the authority to do, they're also giving themselves the authority to decide what goes in the report, a power that they already have, and when to publish it, a power that they've already got. So this is really much ado about nothing.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Why are we debating this bill? They already have the power to do this.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This is my point: Why are we debating this bill? And I'll get to that.

But I want to deal with schedule 2. This is the one that really takes the cake.

I listened to the member from Windsor—Tecumseh speak passionately about the need to have an auto strategy that looks at being able to create more jobs in the auto sector here in Ontario. He talked about those in the automotive sector who are trying to do exactly that but feel somewhat stymied by the Canadian/Ontarian experience of dealing with government.

It's not that government is a bad thing. I'm a New Democrat. I believe government is a good thing. I believe that government can be an instrument to make good things happen. There are all kinds of experiences in our history where government, when they decided to do something, did it extremely well. This nation would not be a nation if it hadn't been for the building of a railway across this country, something that government decided to do. There are all kinds of examples, from 1867 on, that show that government could do good things.

But schedule 2—give me a break: "Ontario is committed to maintaining its competitive edge in the increasingly competitive global economy." That's in the preamble. Oh, my God. Like we didn't know that? Wow. I read it in the bill—I was so excited this weekend—so I knew it was true.

Then it says, "Clusters, which are geographically concentrated groups of interconnected businesses and related entities, can perform an important function in regional economic development by increasing productivity, innovation and competitiveness." Like we didn't

know that already? My God, I read it in a bill. I was so surprised when I saw it there, I thought, "What a good idea." Can you imagine that? Somebody actually looks at the mining sector and says, "I have a strategy on how to assist the mining sector, create more jobs and be responsible to the environment and to Ontarians." Can you imagine the government having an idea of doing something around the automotive sector? I would have never thought that if I hadn't read that in that bill in the preamble. I thought, "Very, very smart. Boy, these guys have it."

1700

Then in the last part of the preamble, it says, "Ontario can act as a catalyst to spur the development of clusters. By working with businesses and other entities to develop plans with respect to the development of clusters, Ontario can promote the growth of jobs and the economy." Oh my God, I didn't know that was possible, Mr. Speaker. I read it in the bill, I hurried to my computer, I started to write this very long speech and I went, "But they can do that already." It was like a huge letdown. As I looked at the iPad that I got from the Legislature as part of the little project that they've got going on, I read the bill and I thought, "My God. All of these things we can do already."

So then I said, "Okay, well maybe there's something in the nuts and bolts of the"—

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think somebody's trying to jump out of that heater up there. You can hear him banging on the pipe. It's an old building. It's got character, I gotta say. Can you hear it? Clink, clink, clink. It's pretty funny. My office does that all the time. It explains why I speak the way that I do.

But let me go through schedule 2 of the bill, which is really interesting. This takes the cake. It defines both "cluster" and "minister."

"Cluster" means a geographically concentrated group of interconnected businesses and related entities; ('pôle de compétitivité')." Okay, cool. I'm cool with that.

"Minister" I don't need to describe. We all know what that is.

Here's what it is. It says, "The minister may prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters." My God, a minister could never do that until this bill came to this House. Did you know that? Never would a minister even think of doing something like that.

It says, "The minister may prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters," and then it talks about the content of the plan: "A plan with respect to the development of a cluster shall include the following:

"1. A description of the cluster." Did you know that there's an automotive strategy, member for Windsor—Tecumseh? Did you know there was a mining sector, Mr. Mantha from Algoma—Manitoulin? Did you know there was an agricultural sector, Mr. Clark from Leeds—Grenville? My God, we didn't know that until we saw that bill.

"2. An assessment of challenges and opportunities with respect to the development of the cluster." We don't

know there's challenges? We deal with them every day. I just got off the phone with somebody with regards to a challenge in one of these clusters.

"3. The objectives and intended outcomes of the plan." I didn't know. My God, they need regulation and they need legislation to do that?

It goes on to describe—but here's the thing: Under section 4, "If the minister prepares a plan with respect to the development of a cluster, the minister shall"—and this is really the fun part;

"(a) make public a draft plan and consult"—oh, no. I wanted to go to 5. Sorry. Let me get to 5:

"Amendments to plan

"5(1) The minister may at any time make amendments to a plan with respect to the development of a cluster by making public the amended plan along with an explanation of the purpose of the amendments." In other words, if he don't like what's going on in the cluster and what the government is doing, he or she can change it. Hello? Like ministers can't do that now?

Then it goes on to say, "Plan preparation ceased, plan revoked

"6. The minister may decide to cease the preparation of a plan with respect to the development of a cluster or revoke the plan at any time by making the decision public, and the minister's obligations under this act with respect to the plan cease immediately."

Let me see if I understand this. They have fallen off the turnip truck and they've found out there are clusters in our economy, something we already knew; they have decided they're going to make a plan on how to work with the clusters in the economy, something that the cabinet already has the authority to do; and they've got to make that report public. I guess that's the only new part. I guess you can give them some credit for that one.

But then in the end, guess what? The report comes out. It's a damning report that they don't like? Under section 6, schedule 2 of the bill, they can get rid of the whole darned thing.

So I say to myself, "What is this all about?" This is a communications exercise. This is the government of Ontario saying, "We want to ring the bell. We want to shine the light over there, showing that we're doing something, because we certainly don't want you looking over here, where things are going on."

Again, I say it's interesting that members of the government have decided not to participate in this debate. I would think they would be proud: They would be on their feet, they would be engaging in debate, they would just be pushing their points forward, and they would be so proud of what they're doing. Well, if I was a government member, I don't think I would get up either. I would be surprised.

So I'm saying to my friends on the other side, with all due respect and all friendship—you know me, I'm a big friendly kind of guy. Meet me in the hallway, and I always say "Hi," and all that kind of stuff. But couldn't we be using our legislative time to be doing something else? Is this an attempt or a tactic, as the Deputy Premier

said earlier today, for the government to filibuster its own Legislature with a bill giving themselves the authority on something they already have the authority to do? Is this a strategy? I'm beginning to think that it is.

It is unbelievable. I've been here for 25 years, and this is one of the—it's well-meaning. I don't want to make fun of the fact that we should be working to develop plans around clusters of industry. My good friend from Windsor-Tecumseh made good points about why that's so necessary. But to have a bill to give you the authority to do something which you already have the authority to do is a little bit strange, would you not say? I bet you, opposition House leader from Leeds-Grenville, that this might get some committee time. This might get traveled around the province. If there's one bill that the government will decide to travel, I predict it will be this one, because they'll be able to say, "Look what we're doing for the people of Windsor, the people of Brockville, the people of Ottawa, the people of Timmins and Sudbury and London and Windsor" and different places. If there's any bill that will be traveled, the unfortunate reality is—not that this is a bad bill. It doesn't harm anybody. It's more or less a communication exercise on the part of the government.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A marketing exercise.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would say a marketing exercise, as my good friend, the member from London-Fanshawe—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm getting these ridings straight, Mr. Speaker. I'm learning after all these years. This is pretty good.

I just say, this is really an interesting use of legislative time. This is a bill my friend Steve Clark, the member from Leeds-Grenville, and I—

Mr. Steve Clark: You're going to get all of them.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —I almost had it—would have agreed with the government: We're not going to hold this up in the House. This is a bill that shouldn't have been time-allocated, and my bet is that it will be time-allocated. This is a bill where the Tory House leader and I, with the permission of our caucuses and our leaders, could have said, "You know what? We'll give you this one. In exchange, let's have a little bit more time for whatever it is that you wanted"—you had decided on day care and we would have put something else forward. But no, instead, we're going to use legislative time to debate this for six and a half hours. The government is going to bring in the two-hour time allocation motion. They're going to refer it to committee for two or three days here in Toronto because they're not going to travel it, and then it's going to come back to the House for a couple of hours for third reading.

I just say, what's this all about? This Legislature should be about us in this Legislature finding ways to address the problems that the people of Ontario face. There are people across this province who are either unemployed, underemployed or afraid of losing their employment that really need the help of their provincial

and federal governments—and municipal, in some cases—to do all that they can, to roll up their sleeves, to get what needs to be done, done, so that we're all able to have the benefits of a strong economy and what jobs bring to our families and our local communities. Instead, what we've got is a public relations exercise, essentially, by the government, who's trying to say, "Look what a great job we're doing and look what else we're going to do for you," when they already have the authority to do what's in this bill in the first place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I always find the member opposite quite entertaining when he gets up.

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I think he spooked the ghosts of radiators past away up there. I don't hear it beeping—

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Yes, you do. I don't hear it beeping anymore.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Aaron Lemieux says hi, by the way.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Who does?

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Oh great; good. Say hi back.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, before I get completely thrown off track here, that there's nothing wrong with ringing the bell on clusters or shining the light or getting a focus towards those things that we have every reason to believe, if embraced, will work better in terms of economic development in our province. There's nothing wrong with that. In fact, the focus on clustering has been shown to be very effective. I spent some time last week at the digital marketing innovation hub down at Ryerson, several hundred thousand square feet of young people who are working collaboratively in cluster areas. I suspect a good hunk of those young people down there are going to be multi-millionaires by the time they're 30—very innovative ideas.

1710

There's another cluster that's an innovation centre that McMaster has developed. By the way, McMaster will be here—well, they're here now, actually, in room 228. They're quite anxious to talk to the members of this House about the impact of their innovation clustering. I would invite you all to come there.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Who won the football game?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: It was a great game, I've got to tell you. Oskie wee wee, oskie waa waa. We're underdogs next week, but I want to make a prediction right now: Ti-Cats are going to win next week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill again and to the member for Timmins-James Bay. I think in summary, what he was really saying is that this is truly a public relations exercise yet again by the Liberals to tell the public how wonderful they're doing, and giving them

authority to do something they already have authority to do, which is truly sad.

One of the challenges—and I think he brought it up quite early in this comments—is that nothing really compels this government to actually take action. It talks about what it can do, and it talks about what goes into the plan besides who should be consulted. It determines how the plan is reviewed, revoked or made public, but they don't even have to bring that plan back to us. They don't have to bring that report. They're going to spend lots of money again on a report that may never see the light of day if it doesn't say exactly what they want it to say, and we know what that will be: The world is rosy, everything is good, the economy is rolling right along, and they're overachieving yet again.

Tell that to the 300,000 people who are unemployed. Tell that to the people who are not getting front-line services in health care. Tell that to the people who are not getting services in community and social services, which I'm privileged to be the critic of.

It concerns me yet again that here's another bill with a great title that sounds like it's wonderful, but the businesses in my riding are telling me that there's too much red tape. The cost of energy is driving them out of business. They can't keep up with the burden of all of the red tape from this government. They want to see some significant change. And the debt loads that this province is carrying are putting the burden back on those businesses which cannot expand in our province.

This bill also talks a fair bit about trying to get more business. If we don't see the action—it's a lot of talk about a plan, a lot of talk about legislation, but what is really the plan they have that they haven't done in the last 12 years? What we want to see soon—I've wanted to see it the whole three years I've been here—is the actual action piece to all of these bills that they bring out, not talking about the platitudes of how wonderful they're doing. What's really going to change to allow the people at the front lines to truly have more jobs, better health care and better education?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

M. Michael Mantha: Toujours un plaisir d'être présent dans la Chambre en arrière de mon collègue de Timmins-James Bay. Puis, il apporte, après 25 ans—25 ans, mon beau Gilles?

M. Gilles Bisson: Oui.

M. Michael Mantha: Il apporte 25 ans d'expérience ici dans la Chambre et il apporte tout le temps une atmosphère, on va dire, multicolore, sur ce qu'on envisage dans notre province.

Puis le message que Gilles, mon collègue de Timmins-James Bay, a apporté au plancher aujourd'hui, c'est essentiellement que quand tu as une belle fenêtre—et elle est vraiment belle, la fenêtre—la fenêtre ne changera pas si tu ajoutes des rideaux. Et puis essentiellement, c'est ce qu'on fait : « Voici la belle fenêtre. On va la décorer avec un beau petit rideau alentour. » Ça ne donne rien. Il n'y a rien. C'est encore une fenêtre. Tu peux ouvrir la fenêtre

et l'air peut entrer. C'est l'essentiel qu'un gouvernement devrait faire.

Ce qu'il y a dans le projet de loi, c'est exactement ce qu'un gouvernement doit faire. Tu dois identifier où tu peux avoir—excuse, c'est une affaire qui m'a bafoué dans le projet de loi. Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, «cluster»?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: How do you say “cluster” in French?

M. Michael Mantha: C'est ce que je regarde pour. C'est un pôle de compétitivité. Je viens juste d'en apprendre encore aujourd'hui.

M. Gilles Bisson: Tu peux dire un «cluster».

M. Michael Mantha: Bon, je vais dire «cluster». Vous savez, franchement, ceci est essentiellement la tâche du gouvernement. S'il faut qu'on attende de reconnaître leur tâche à travers un projet de loi tel quel, c'est vraiment une perte de temps pour tous les gens qui sont ici. C'est leur rôle. C'est ce que le gouvernement devrait envisager de faire. Puis pour apporter ceci à travers un projet de loi, franchement, c'est une perte de temps. Faites votre job. C'est ce que les gens attendent de vous.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm very happy to have the opportunity to rise in my place and speak a little bit this afternoon for a couple of minutes on Bill 7. I did listen closely to what the member from Timmins–James Bay and some of the other opposition members had to say with respect to this bill. If there's any particular thing that I'm struck by, by and large, based on the comments and debate and discussion that I've heard so far, it's that the general principle that is at the foundation of this particular legislation is supportable or is supported.

I understand there are concerns that are being expressed about whether or not this is the precise tool to be used to accomplish the outcome that we are talking about, and I understand, I suppose, where members of both opposition parties are coming from, Speaker. But the bottom line is that this is legislation that has extensive support from those who will continue to work closely with our government to help spur economic development and growth.

As I've said many times in the past on other legislation and other debates that we've had, Bill 7 is yet again another step forward in the evolution and the progress that our government has made across a wide variety of issues that are very important with respect to making sure that our economy remains strong and vibrant. For example, some will know that since 2008, over the last six years, our government has eliminated 17—

Mr. Bill Walker: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm just wondering if we have quorum in the House.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

The Minister of Transportation had the floor when we started the quorum call. I return to the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Speaker. I was in the midst of explaining what a great evolution or progress this government has made with respect to drastically reducing and eliminating some of the regulatory burden. That's one of the reasons, along with a lot of the other crucial investments we've made to help keep the economy strong, that just recently we've seen such strong employment numbers and such strong job numbers. It's why the province of Ontario remains either the best or second best in terms of its ranking with respect to foreign direct investment. It's why there's a great deal of optimism in communities right across this province with respect to our economic future.

I would hope that because, by and large, the members from both opposition parties who spoke did not talk with respect to opposing the substance of this bill, we can continue to move the debate forward, get the legislation passed and, together, we can ensure that Ontario's economy remains strong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins–James Bay has two minutes to reply.

M. Gilles Bisson: J'aimerais beaucoup remercier les députés d'avoir répliqué à mon discours. Écoute : c'est pas mal clair ce que le gouvernement a dans ce projet de loi. C'est vraiment quoi? C'est l'habilité d'être capable de faire un plan, quelque chose qu'ils ont déjà le droit de faire; et l'habilité de regrouper, régionalement et par secteur, différentes parties de notre économie pour être capable d'aider ce secteur, quelque chose qu'ils ont déjà l'habilité de faire.

As I said inside the speech that I just gave today, the government has the power to do everything that's in this bill, so it leads us to the conclusion, why is the government doing this? This is like, “Everybody, look over here. Look over here. There's something that's nice and shiny and new we want you to look at, as if we're doing something.” But the reality is, they don't want people looking over here, which are the problems in the economy.

Across this province, we're having a problem when it comes to the economy, and the government wants to be seen as having done something, but the reality is, there's nothing in this bill that's any different than what the government could do now. This is nothing short of a communications exercise on the part of the government. The government, in a funny kind of way, is filibustering its own legislation with a communication exercise. I'm not saying what's in here is bad. What I'm saying is, it doesn't accomplish anything that you don't already have the power to do.

1720

So I just urge the members across the way—there are things that we could be working on together. This is one

of these bills we could have easily given you quicker passage on in exchange for allowing other bills to travel the province on issues that are important to the people of this province. We need to remember: This is not only our Legislature. More importantly, this is the Legislature of the people of Ontario. What we need to do is always remember that it's them that we work for. When we don't allow the people of this province to fully participate in vetting legislation by way of the committee process, I think that's a pretty big letdown on the part of this Legislature when it comes to the responsibility that you have as a government to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnett): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm just trying to give the government the opportunity to stand and to debate Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnership for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

As has been said many times this afternoon in the Legislature, this bill doesn't really require legislation. The member from Timmins-James Bay was right: This can all be done in regulation. It does not have to have a formal piece of legislation. Even within the act, it says that the government has the ability to withdraw everything that the act may be able to do to help small business. Talk about redundancy and a bill that really is fluff and does not need to be done.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been encouraging the government for years to reduce the regulatory red tape burden that's unnecessary. It's incredible how the piles of paper grow and the government jobs grow for red tape and regulations that don't need to occur. No wonder taxpayers go crazy when small business people get strangled by red tape. Every time they have to fill out more papers, it takes away their profitability. It takes away their chance to maybe create some more jobs. But no, it's buried in red tape, buried in paperwork that does not need to occur. In fact, every hour that a small business person has to spend dealing with government forms or dealing with what seem to be unnecessary regulations is an hour taken away from that very thing that I just mentioned, what they do best, which is actually serving their customers, trying to expand their customer base, trying to grow more jobs, because they want their businesses to grow and be profitable. That is the goal of most small business people. I don't think it's understood by the government at all. We, along with the CFIB, have been saying for years with great passion, "Stop killing small businesses in Ontario. Stop making it more frustrating for us to do business here and to grow. Get out of our way." Of course, there has to be a certain amount of regulations that are existing in the province, but not near as many as this government has let grow and expand.

The CFIB said, "Well, it's an okay first step. It's not really what we asked for, but at least they're looking at it and saying 'reducing red tape and regulation.'" They are asking for regulation reduction targets to ensure that there is zero net growth in terms of regulations and red

tape, helping to reinforce the one-to-two rule whereby for every new regulation affecting small business and tying them up, two regulations would be eliminated. That's something that we have long been crying for, but again this could just be done—if I can say the word again—in regulations, not in legislation, not taking up our time where we could actually be doing something to solve the large number of problems that exist for small businesses out there.

One example that we continually hear is not just about red tape. It depends on what business you go into. You can have an example every day of ridiculous pieces of regulation and paperwork that need to be done, but it actually is something that we have to focus on. So, yes to reducing red tape, but we know that energy is a huge problem out there. If I did a survey of businesses in my area, hydro would be number one, followed closely by red tape.

I know that there have been many, many articles written about the exorbitant cost of hydro and electricity bills, but also the exorbitant waste of government bureaucracies within OPG and Hydro One. There have been some articles written lately. This one is by Lorrie Goldstein on November 8. It's called "Wynne's Billion-Dollar Hydro Boondoggle." Basically, it says, "'Ontario's Breath-Taking, Record-Breaking Month for Electricity Bills' ... reveal that last month, Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government paid \$1 billion more for electricity than the market value of that power."

The "global adjustment" in Ontario—the difference between the market value of electricity and what it actually cost to produce—topped \$1 billion, for the first time, ever."

That's like the power plants all over again, just in one month.

Mr. Bill Walker: The waste is unbelievable.

Ms. Laurie Scott: The waste is incredible—an extra charge on all of our hydro bills.

As I've said many times in this Legislature, energy poverty reigns supreme. We have, in this province, for the 90th-some month in a row, the highest unemployment in the whole of Canada. The Liberals have been in government for 11 years, so I can't say they're really on the right path.

The waste in electricity from poor planning is costing us businesses and manufacturing jobs—over 300,000. I'm sure there's more. How do you actually get those jobs back? We've got a little bill here that says they're going to reduce the red tape and do some clusters for economic growth. Really? That's going to help bring manufacturing jobs, or jobs at all, back to the province of Ontario? I don't think so.

Like I said, a good first attempt, the red tape thing, but really something that could be done in regulation.

The real story is, if you don't have a proper business climate, which we don't—I touched on hydro and forcing wind turbines upon us in rural Ontario and solar projects upon us, subsidized to a great extent, in communities that don't want them. Right now, there's an Environmental Review Tribunal going on in my riding of Haliburton—

Kawartha Lakes—Brock that's in its second week, in which we've had Manvers Wind Concerns. Groups have had to raise a great deal of money to do the appeal for five wind turbines. They're going to interfere with the projects of the Cham Shan Buddhist temple, the Peterborough airport—they are business expansions. The Cham Shan temple is a business expansion. The biggest thing is, they're building them on the Oak Ridges moraine. We're overproducing tons of electric power here, but yet we're subsidizing projects that communities don't want. It is bad, bad policy.

There are actually some solutions out there. I know that Parker Gallant has said, "What's the solution? If the province wants to contain electricity rate increases, it needs to halt new hydroelectric, wind and solar projects. In order to reverse rate increases" which the government has said is going to increase by at least 47% over the next five years, they should "seek opportunities to terminate the existing contracts between renewable energy companies and the OPA." But the Premier has indicated that "that's not where they're headed." They're actually going to ask for more projects in their next energy plan.

Alternatives to costly new renewables have been mentioned here—also, importing electricity from Quebec while Ontario refurbishes its nuclear power plants. We've seen European countries that have shut down their wind turbines. We're not learning anything. All we are doing is increasing energy rates, driving residents out of their houses and driving people out of their homes.

There was a man during the campaign who would correlate the increase in his hydro bills to how many extra loaves of bread—he obviously owned a bakery—that had to be made. I think he said it was almost \$700 more that he's going to have to make in his bakery, so that many more loaves of bread, in order to pay for the increase in his electricity bill.

1730

At some point, there's a breaking time, when people say, "I just cannot make it." That, I think, puts it in perspective. So when we say we want to help small businesses, and I said the pretty title that goes on, the reality is that we have a huge debt, a huge deficit. Businesses that want to start up or expand see that, that we're \$287.3 billion in debt, and 11 years ago it was \$139 billion. It's averaging out to about \$21,000 per person in the province of Ontario, and this government has put this burden upon them.

The deficit is not going down, as the government says; it's actually going up by \$2 billion and it's a \$29-million-a-day interest payment. Just servicing all that debt is the third-largest budget item.

The member from Dufferin—Caledon spoke earlier about health care costs and how the CCACs are cutting health care costs and the Ontario Nurses' Association is saying how many nurses are laid off. Unfortunately, that's what happens when you don't balance your books and when you don't have proper fiscal management. Health, social services, education: They all suffer. We know \$500 million is coming out of education. We don't

know what schools they may be closing, but we know that there's \$500 million coming out of education.

So when they bring forward Bill 7, it does a bunch of schedules, it does a little bit of red tape reduction. Let me see. From CFIB, another statistic: It's an \$11-billion loss in productivity with red tape every year—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Every year, my colleagues are saying. Does that make sense to anyone over there? Does anyone even care over there? I don't think so.

They said "the geographic economic clusters." Well, eastern Ontario has huge, huge problems. They have a small rural population, a lot more roads to service. It's a lot harder to get high-speed Internet there because of the geography of the area. The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus has produced papers upon papers—very good information about eastern Ontario and the fact that it is harder to do business and it's a struggle to do business in eastern Ontario. Has the government listened to any of this? I don't think so.

I think that every ministry has been analyzed by its stakeholders—say, the Ministry of Agriculture. You can go into areas in my riding—we went into Sunderland Co-op. They had to have so many permits they covered a whole wall. We took a picture of it. The number of permits was unbelievable. For every ministry, they have to go in and fill in the same thing: their name, their address, things that take up time. You can get into 50-some permits required by Sunderland Co-op or a co-operative like that. They already can tell you what red tape and regulation needs to be eliminated that is no longer useful. If you look at the agriculture sector and you look at the Ministry of Natural Resources, they can tell you. The people out in the field can tell you what red tape and regulations need to be gotten rid of.

It also says in here "the regulatory burden." Well, let's just talk a little bit about the apprentices and the College of Trades. We long fought against the College of Trades over here. Tons of industries signed up to stop the trades tax, people who want to grow their businesses, who want to be employed in Ontario. A College of Trades is unnecessary. They're already regulated by other ministries. They don't need a college of trades, which, by the way, for people listening at home, is not an actual college that helps young people get into the trades at all.

We've long said that the ratios are wrong in the province of Ontario. I said earlier that the west has won. The west has won the battle for our young people. If they wanted to get a trade, why would our young people not go to a province in western Canada where they are accepted quickly, it's structured with business and education out there so they can get into their trade and make good money? We all know there's a shortage of skilled trades coming—well, it's here. If you go to northern Ontario, in the mining field they're bringing in people from as far as Africa because we cannot get young people into the fields that they need.

I fought for over a decade, as my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound—I fought for over a decade before your time here—

Mr. Bill Walker: You're always ahead of me.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —not before Wiarton Willie, but before your time here—to change the apprenticeship ratios to 1 to 1. Other provinces do it. This is just too many controls by this government to stop our young people from getting into the trades. We continue to fight. We haven't won it yet.

I see that they now have Tony Dean, who's going to look over the College of Trades to see what is going on there—or what should not be going on there, maybe, I can say. But a huge waste of money, and again, extra taxes and extra burden onto our—everything from the hairdressers to the barbers to the mechanics. They're going to look at the construction trades next.

I can tell you, when the home builders were here last week, they were so against the College of Trades. They wanted to invite Tony Dean up to Haliburton, especially, the Haliburton home builders, to say, "This is what the College of Trades means to me employing people and what it means to me staying in business."

When you see any rationale for Bill 7—they should look at the College of Trades, seriously, because that's a loss in productivity here in the province of Ontario. It's a loss of jobs for our young people. But I don't think that they really, really care about tackling that issue, the same as they don't care about tackling the hydro rates that I mentioned. So hydro rates and the red tape burden.

I am more than pleased to talk about a bill here this afternoon, but I can't stress enough the fact that we don't need this bill at all. It doesn't even require us to have debate time. I'd like to debate a whole lot of other issues that actually the government could—we could help them with wins on. I had just spoken to the Ontario realty association. They came to see us, and they said, "What is this about the government going to maybe give municipalities more taxing powers? How is that helping us?"

We said we don't agree with that. Toronto has that now, and in specific, it's with the land transfer tax. My colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings spoke to them this morning.

Mr. Todd Smith: I did.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Good job.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You were right on the money. They see that the real estate market will just slow right down. It's another impediment to people being able to buy a house. They look at what their property taxes are, but they had to go up, because we know this government has burdened municipalities beyond belief. OPP policing costs are crippling my riding. They're going to have to increase taxes there. If they have this municipal property transfer tax, if that's the ability given to municipalities to put another tax on a homeowner, that's going to impede them from buying property.

I just don't know how young people are going to be able to afford to buy a house in the province of Ontario. We know they struggle to get a job here. You have the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Bank of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada all sending out very serious

signals of what could happen in the province of Ontario with such high debt and deficit, how they're going to balance the books by 2017-18, which no one actually believes they are, except the Liberals, so they must be going to be increasing taxes, or somehow they're getting into your pockets—

Mr. Michael Harris: Carbon tax: revenue tool.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We asked, for sure, today about the carbon tax. The minister for climate change over there said, "Oh, no, no, we're not talking about it." But I don't know if he has talked to his Premier, because the Premier was certainly over in Quebec speaking about a carbon tax. There's only so much tax that you can get out of people's pockets without them throwing up their hands, giving up, either leaving the province, selling their house. We're going to have more renters because no one is going to be able to afford to buy anything in the province of Ontario.

We talked about the cumulative debt, the province of Ontario's being higher than all the other provinces combined. They were given advice. Adviser after adviser have given the Premier advice, and her predecessor advice. They never quite listened to all of it. But it's on the dockets, and they say, "Now we've got this person or we've developed this panel, and we're listening." But, in reality, the debt has gone up; the deficit has gone up. We still have the highest taxes in North America in energy and, I think, the highest payroll tax in North America. You really can't be competitive with that.

1740

This gesture of Bill 7—because really, it is just a gesture about reducing red tape and building clusters—can all be done. The real, foundational problems in this province are the government's inability to listen to the people and the burden they're under, whether it be energy, whether it be red tape. Now they're trying to do the mandatory pension plan. I just heard from businesses in my riding when they said that, "Well, I guess we're laying off someone. I can't afford to hire anyone else."

We were trying to help them over here in opposition. They have the majority government; all we can do is kind of provide advice, so we do. Thank goodness there's Hansard, so they can, I'm sure, reread all of this later on. But really, this bill is pretty useless. I think they should listen more to the CFIB and listen to the analysis on the energy policy, because it is just taking the best of the province of Ontario, the competitiveness, and thus, our young people are going west.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long 20 minutes—

Mr. Bill Walker: No, it hasn't. You brought a lot of good things up.

Mr. Michael Harris: Unanimous consent: Add 20.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I got it to 20 to 6. We'll try to—

Mr. Bill Walker: Take it right to 6 o'clock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: To 6 o'clock, no, but another 10 minutes of questions and answers would be good. It's going to be close. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm going to try: Kawartha-Brock Lake?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Wow. That's good. It's a long riding.

I was listening to the member from Kawartha—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Holy smokes—and what I think is very telling about this bill is that—and she had mentioned it herself. When she originally stood up, the Speaker said, “Further debate,” waited a little bit, “Further debate,” waited a little bit. Nobody stood up, so of course the member immediately jumped out of her seat to continue this debate, because we're trying to express that this bill seems to be—what we're looking at on the face of it—a marketing tool for the Liberals.

If the Liberals truly believe in this bill—and that's something I wanted to ask them; I don't know if that's out of order when you're in debate. I wanted to ask the members on the other side who are listening to the debate, why aren't you standing up and speaking to this bill if you believe in the bill? If you believe in something that your government puts forward, wouldn't you be passionate about it to sell it, to market it to us so that we can buy into the bill and so that the public can buy into the bill?

I challenge you to stand up and debate your own bill—if that's allowed. Tell me what you find wonderful about this bill, how it's going to make a difference to the climate and make a better business climate for businesses in Ontario. I hope you take my challenge seriously and stand up to speak to the bill. I'd love to hear from a member backing up the legislation that has been presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I did listen closely to the original member—

Interjection.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I did. I did listen closely to it. I promise that I did, and I of course heard the member from the NDP caucus, I suppose, challenging our side to stand and defend the bill itself.

I had the chance just a couple of minutes ago in the previous round of debate to talk a little bit about why this kind of legislation is important. Of course, there was a bit of an interruption in my remarks earlier, so I momentarily lost my train of thought at that particular point in time, but what's really important from my perspective is to remember that this legislation, Bill 7, is something that's extremely important to the business community in particular and to those who have a passionate interest in moving Ontario's economy forward.

I think of people in my own community. In the wonderful community of Vaughan, just sitting on the northern edge of Toronto, representatives from the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce—I was at a breakfast a

few weeks ago that the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce hosted. If there's one message I've heard from business leaders in my own community—and I'm sure the other 106 members of this Legislature hear a similar thing—it's that they want an ongoing dialogue and partnership with government to make sure that we make decisions here about where and how we're going to invest in the economy, but also how we're going to intelligently, surgically and sustainably lessen the regulatory burden that they're facing.

We see repeatedly—and I mentioned this in my earlier remarks—very clear evidence that the plan is working. I talked about what we've done since 2008 and the extent to which we've actually been able to work closely with business to reduce the regulatory burden, and we see the positive results that have occurred here in the province since that time. I talked about the job numbers we saw recently. I talked also about the fact that we continue to have a plan to move the province forward and things like investing in transit and transportation infrastructure. This is what the community out there needs to see. Most importantly, they want to see this kind of legislation get passed so we can move the province's economy forward and keep moving in the right direction.

I look forward to the rest of the debate this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank my colleague the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for her wonderful presentation. I found it extremely detailed. One of the words she used at the very end of the speech when she referred to Bill 7 was a “gesture,” and I think that was a very good use of that term, because when you start to look at some of the business organizations—and I appreciate that the Minister of Transportation spoke earlier about chambers of commerce.

I, too, was at one of my local chambers of commerce. In fact, two chambers of commerce had their awards ceremony recently, one in Brockville and one in Gananoque that encompassed both Gananoque and the Thousand Islands. Many of those chamber members were members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I note from their recommendations to the government on red tape reduction. If you read the five recommendations, this bill, this gesture of a bill, really only deals with half of the very first recommendation. On the other four recommendations there's silence.

Obviously the half that they've done is, they've introduced legislation. What they haven't done that other provinces have done is prescribe reduction targets, and I think it's very important to be able to put targets within the bill.

As well, the CFIB is recommending that government fully implement the regular review of high-impact regulations. In fact, they're asking the government, encouraging them, to implement the measure across the entire government, to review some of the delegated administrative authorities like TSSA, Stewardship Ontario, rebranding their regulatory feedback form, and also improving services through bizpal.ca.

The CFIB has made a number of recommendations, and with Bill 7, they've really only scratched the surface. I agree with the member. This is a gesture and only a gesture.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to follow comments made by the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, who did a lot of research into this bill. She talked a lot about the need to cut red tape.

I'd like to bring the debate back, if I could, because I know those issues are important in her community. In my community, we keep calling for a real made-in-Ontario solution to the loss of manufacturing jobs and the loss of automotive jobs. What we need is a real automotive policy, a real manufacturing strategy. If the government wants to get serious, they can send a message to Ottawa to either lead, follow or get the heck out of the way, and come up with a policy in Ontario that will force Ottawa to come dragging its heels behind, because we need to do something to protect our manufacturing base in this country—in this province, especially.

Michigan has a real plan. They've proven it. They're doing it the right way. We could clearly follow them, not what this is, a kind of fuzzy, uncoordinated—it's not a blueprint for success, what's on the table, and it's a long way from that. We need a real, focused approach. We need to create jobs and protect jobs, and this bill is falling short of that.

What this government could be doing and should be doing is taking this bill around the province, consulting with workers in the manufacturing sector and the automotive sector, asking those on the line, asking management, asking the people who rely on the manufacturing base in our communities what they can do to improve their lives, and they can come up with a real policy, an automotive policy, a manufacturing strategy that Ontario so desperately needs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. Now we have a chance to hear from the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to thank the member from London-Fanshawe; the Minister of Transportation, who

I'm sure is going to hear more from us about the road conditions and the snowplowing mandate for the MTO; the member from Leeds-Grenville, who certainly was right on in saying that the CFIB wants red tape and regulation decreased, but really, this government's bill has only done half of their first recommendation when they made four recommendations.

Mr. Bill Walker: Well, that's a pretty good achievement.

Ms. Laurie Scott: That's actually a very poor report card, for sure. They should listen to the CFIB more. We all know that small business creates the most number of jobs. They're certainly the backbone of rural Ontario in my riding. They're the job creators.

When an organization that's in touch with small businesses makes recommendations, they spend a lot of time and effort. Of course they're not going to oppose this bill, but really, it's half of the first recommendation of four recommendations. I think the government certainly could have done better.

We certainly want them to do better. As I said, we're out there saying, "Here are some ideas." I mentioned many of them when I spoke earlier.

The member for Windsor-Tecumseh, who spoke earlier today, is asking the government still: "Where's the automotive policy?" He's in tune with the people in his riding. He's bringing forward those ideas.

The job losses in manufacturing: Nobody is fabricating that. It's all real. The stats are over 300,000 and possibly more.

I spoke about competitiveness in the province of Ontario. Red tape and regulation—no question they're part of it. It's a hindrance to businesses. But I spoke a lot about hydro, too, and the fact that hydro rates have tripled. They're only going to go up another 42% in five years; you know they're going to go higher. All of that affects small business. So that's how to really help small businesses: Get those things under control.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to use my prerogative and adjourn the House. I wish everyone a safe trip home.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.
The House adjourned at 1752.

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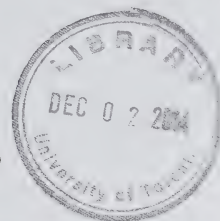
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Journal des débats (Hansard)



Tuesday 25 November 2014

Mardi 25 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 25 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 24, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and represent the views of my party, the NDP, and also the views of the good people of Timiskaming-Cochrane and specifically on this bill, Bill 7.

I'd like to read the official title first: An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014. The title has all the right words. "Burden reduction": Business likes to hear that because business is burdened by a lot of regulations. "Partnerships for jobs and growth": Again, those are things that business likes to hear. From that, I give the official title top marks. It's a really good title. Then we go to the unofficial title, which is the Better Business Climate Act. Once again, great marks. The title gets great marks.

Just to clear the confusion, if there's any confusion, we are going to support this bill, by the way.

But we do have to read further than the title, because one thing we've learned from this government is that they are really good at the great titles. Then, sometimes when you read the bill further, which is our job, you realize that what the bill says and what the title says are two different things. The reason they give the really good titles is so they can say, "Well, how could you vote

against something like that?" But they're basing that on the title. That's why it's important: When you're in government and you have a really thin bill, you need a really good title. That's really important. Everyone at home should remember that: If the bill is really small, a big title is really important. It's got to get all the catchy words like "partnership," "growth," "jobs" and "burden reduction." It's really important.

The next thing we're going to look at in this bill is the explanatory notes. Basically, for the folks at home, the explanatory notes are kind of like the Coles Notes of what this bill is about. If you don't want to read all the legal stuff, which we do, but you want to get a quick read of what this bill is about, you check out the explanatory notes; very important.

This bill has two main parts. Schedule 1 is the Burden Reduction Reporting Act part—again, very important to business. I'll read the explanatory notes, because they're pretty interesting, actually. "Schedule 1 enacts the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014, which requires the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to publish an annual report with respect to actions taken by the government of Ontario to reduce burdens." Basically, this is a piece of legislation that forces the government to produce a report. That's something the government could do without a specific piece of legislation. It doesn't really say what the government is going to do to reduce the burden. Good regulations are there to protect the population. For those who are worried that some good regulations will be gutted, it doesn't say how that's not going to happen either. It's basically a report. So is a report good? Sure, a report is good. Does it warrant the brouhaha of the great title? I'm not so sure. We're talking about a report; we're passing legislation for a report.

But there is a second part to the bill which may be, perhaps—let's hope—much stronger than the first part. The second part "enacts the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, which states that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure may"—not he shall or not he must, but he may—"prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters. As part of the preparation of a plan, the minister must consult"—there's a "must"; that's good—"as he or she considers advisable, with persons or entities that have an interest in the development of the cluster. The plan must contain specified items, including the objectives and intended outcomes of the plan and performance measures. The minister is required to review the plan and make public a report"—oh, another report—"with respect to the results of the

review. The minister is given various regulation-making powers with respect to the plans.”

We’re talking about clusters, and clusters are a good thing. We’ve got the high-tech cluster in Waterloo, a cluster that a lot of people—in my region we have several, actually, right close to Temiskaming Shores. Because in northern Ontario we are one of the biggest agricultural areas, we have an agricultural service cluster in Temiskaming Shores, in that area around Earleton and New Liskeard. Whenever farmers in northern Ontario, north-eastern Ontario or northwestern Quebec need parts or service for their equipment, they go to Temiskaming Shores or Earleton. That’s where all the dealers are; that’s an agricultural service cluster; that’s where there are a lot of elevators.

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines was just in my region, and I’m sure he appreciated how much agriculture is there. That area, those elevators, those dealerships, those service people, they service the whole northeastern Ontario and northwestern Quebec. That’s a cluster. A lot of people don’t think of it that way, but that is what it is. It developed, I’d say, autonomously, as many other clusters did as well. If we use that as an example, I’m not sure how this bill is going to help them or hurt them, because in most cases clusters develop for reasons of geography or the people who are there, or in the case of Waterloo, because there were one or two companies and excellent universities, and that’s why they developed. I’m not sure and we’re not sure if this bill is actually leading the charge or just hooking a caboose on the train and trying to get some mileage out of someone else’s work. It’s not clear what this bill is going to do to actually help the cluster. Again, the title is much stronger than what’s actually in the bill.

0910

There are a few things that the government could actually do regarding both parts of the bill. The first part is reducing burden, and I’ve got a couple of examples in my riding. I have the honour of representing a company in my riding: Mohawk Garnet. They developed a garnet mine—not like gemstone garnet, but sandpaper garnet, 3M garnet. One of the very important things about that that’s very noteworthy is that it’s the only wholly-owned First Nation mining operation in Canada. That’s incredible. And they started this from scratch. By chance, I happened to meet the manager of this operation. I met him a few years ago when I was travelling on behalf of the federation of agriculture to the Think North Summit in Thunder Bay. Remember the Think North Summit? That’s where I met Mr. Bob McMurdy.

I’ve talked a lot to Bob, and I’ve followed his progression in trying to develop this mining opportunity. He could tell you horror stories about the hoops that he’s had to jump through to get this going. Believe me, the First Nations are not out to break rules; neither is the management of Mohawk Garnet. It’s issues that could and should be solved very easily, but, I would say—what’s the word I’m looking for?—the attitude of some of the members in the bureaucracy is not an attitude of, “Okay,

let’s see what we can do to fix this problem” or, “How can we make sure there’s a remedy in place to get this done?” The attitude is more, “Well, you know what? These are the rules and you are just going to have to sit tight until we get there.” That is one of the things that has to change.

But I don’t see it, and I think that’s what business is hoping for when they read titles of bills like this. When you actually read what is or what isn’t in the bill, it’s not the same as the title. At least with this bill—and I will give credit where credit is due. At least what’s in this bill isn’t exactly the opposite of what the title is. That has happened in this Legislature in the last government. But at least with this bill, what’s in the bill somewhat represents what’s in the title—as opposed to the fighting fraud bill, where basically they were saying they were going to lower insurance rates, and how they were doing that was not allowing victims of accidents to sue. Actually, the title was misrepresenting the bill. In this case, at least the bill and the title are somewhat along the same vein.

Another issue, a very important one to the people of my riding—when we’re talking about clusters, we have in this province a public transportation cluster. We’ve got Metrolinx, which moves people and which is owned by the people of Ontario. We have the ONTC, which has refurbishment shops which can rebuild cars owned by Metrolinx. Now, that would and could be a cluster that would benefit the people throughout the province. What are the minister and the Premier doing to help that cluster? I dare say, Speaker, not much, if anything at all. We knew the writing was on the wall when ONTC lost the Metrolinx contract to an out-of-province company. Instead of responding with “Okay, what can we do to get this on the road as they were promised?” instead of saying, “Let’s see if we can get a strategic alliance,” which they were promised with Metrolinx—a strategic alliance is another nice word for cluster. Instead, no—no strategic alliance. Instead, it’s announced that the ONTC shops can refurbish some of the cars on the Polar Bear Express. That is not going to save the ONTC shops. The ONTC shops and the people who work there are as good—no, they’re better than anyone else in the country.

To make matters worse, shops that can rebuild and refurbish train cars are in extremely high demand right now—extremely high demand to rebuild railcars. If you remember the Lac-Mégantic disaster, a lot of those rail cars can’t be replaced quick enough, so they’re having to rebuild them and passenger cars. There are huge contracts out there to rebuild wheels, which you can do at the ONTC shops, which would make extremely good sense for the people of Ontario. Yet this government seems paralyzed to actually make decisions that would benefit the people of northern Ontario, benefit the people of Ontario. Yes, we stopped the sale of ONTC. We stopped the giveaway of those shops, and now it appears that this government is willing to let them die on the vine when there is a huge demand for their services.

I demand that the Premier actually answer the question: Is there going to be a strategic alliance with Metro-

linx, which would benefit all the people of Ontario? Instead of spending time with bills like this and talking about how the Minister of Economic Development could make plans for clusters and should make plans for clusters and may act on those plans, how about this government actually does something with a cluster that they own, that we all own? We own shops that fix railcars, and we own public transportation that uses—guess what—railcars. It seems like a pretty good fit, and yet while these shops are in huge demand in the rest of North America, in North Bay we're laying off painters because there's not enough work, because the government will not give the people the tools they need to actually access that work. That's wrong. That's wrong, and on behalf of the people of northern Ontario, I demand that the government, the minister, the Premier, actually make their plans public, what they need to do, and actually come forth with their promise and provide a mechanism so that the ONTC shops can develop a strategic alliance with Metrolinx and actually benefit all the people of Ontario and actually do what the great title on this bill says.

On another issue within this: Let's talk about a single regulation that could be impacted with this. I talked about how in Timiskaming-Cochrane, we have a regional agriculture cluster. I've listened several times to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change talk about the effects of climate change in the environment. I have to say that this summer in my riding, we have experienced a summer and a fall that we have never experienced before. I know farmers who have farmed—Roy Schubert, for one, has farmed in my area for 55 years, and he has never left crop in the field. Yet this fall, it's estimated that over 50% of the crops in Timiskaming are in the field, and they're going to stay in the field because there is snow. The people who have crop insurance, hopefully, will be able to make their payments, because we have never experienced having to leave half our crops in the field.

0920

A regulation change that would make a difference in the Crop Insurance Act—I believe we're going to discuss the Crop Insurance Act in the near future. A small regulation change—for example, a crop like soybeans, which we haven't grown in Timiskaming for a long time because our weather wasn't conducive to soybeans, but in the last decade or so, and likely due to climate change, soybeans work in our area. This year, because we've had rain all summer, and now snow a month too soon, the soybeans are lost. But because of a regulation that's across the province, crop insurance won't release the soybeans until a certain date, even though they know it's going to be a loss.

Where that impacts the farmers of Timiskaming in a big way is that basically they can't do their fall tillage until those soybeans are released. In Timiskaming, we have to do fall tillage because of our soil and because in the springtime, fields that are tilled heat up much quicker than fields that aren't tilled. So if those soybeans aren't released, a lot of the fall tillage won't be done. In fact, those farmers will be paying for two years for this problem.

It doesn't sound like a big issue. But if half your crops are in the field, and not only can't you get your crops off but you're not allowed to do your fall tillage in a place where fall tillage is necessary, that regulation needs to be changed. Maybe it has to be more site-specific.

I'm sure they weren't thinking about that regulation when they were talking about this bill, but that's the type of regulation that should be changed, and it needs to be changed very quickly. I don't know if we're going to get it done; I need to talk to the minister again about it. But it's things like that. We have to be much more responsive.

I hear the other side talk a lot about climate change. Well, it's time to actually look at the regulations, and not just look at the big picture but look at the small regulations that actually are impacting people now. That's one that would make a big difference for the people in my riding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Comments and questions?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: First, I would like to thank the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for his great words on the bill. It gives me great pleasure to speak on this bill, because my husband and I were business owners, and my husband still is, actually. I used to manage a retirement residence in my previous life, before having the great chance of being elected in this House.

When I think about this bill and everything that we were able to accomplish for small businesses like mine, when I used to own and operate this retirement residence, it is extraordinary. We have been able to remove over 80,000—and I want to reiterate it to the members—80,000 unnecessary burdens for small businesses. This has helped me, as a business owner, be more efficient and cost-effective in putting the resources in my business where they should be.

Mr. Speaker, I think the bill is about partnership, and we haven't heard this very much. We've partnered, and we want to partner, with the businesses.

I look at my husband. He's an operator of a small restaurant, and he comes home and he has to do a lot of paperwork. It takes hours of his time. By having this bill passed, and everything that we're moving towards—the online system—I look at myself, and the WSIB. If I had an injured worker, because of this bill and everything we've moved forward, I was able, with a phone call or the online version, to just say that my worker did not need to take time off. This is cost-efficient, and for a business and a small business owner, this means a lot.

For me, I'm glad to hear that the third opposition—the member will be supporting our bill, because we need to work in partnership.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Speaker, and good morning to you. It's good to see you this morning. I'm pleased to comment a little bit on this bill and thank the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for his great insight over the last 20 minutes.

My concern in the bill is with regard to the red tape portion when, really, this is a bill to study red tape, at the end of the day, and not really act upon it. This government, for the last three years that I've been here, has had ample opportunity to start fixing red tape throughout this province.

I'll take this story back to my own riding, where Railway City Brewing Co., a craft beer operation that started on its own in downtown St. Thomas, Ontario, has seen tremendous growth with their beers. Dead Elephant Ale, for instance, is an excellent beer. I really like the Canada Southern Draft; it's my favourite from their products. They also make a wheat beer; I always call it the Woody Traveller, but I always get it wrong. It's an amazing beer for the summer. At Christmas, of course, they always come up with their Christmas cranberry beer, which has actually taken the Canada Southern Draft and thrown some cranberries in it. It makes it really excellent.

Back to my point on red tape: The craft beer industry in this province is overburdened by red tape, and it's basically with regard to the silly rules that this government fails to address. Two of them that I'll hit on—number one is transporting their beer. There's the rule and the regulations, the red tape, that won't allow craft beer companies to share transportation with other craft beer companies. They have to purchase their own truck or rent their own truck to take their beer to, say, the LCBO. The LCBO says, "No, you can't have more than one craft beer on the truck." I think that's utterly ridiculous. For a government that's so pro-small business, you'd think that would be an easy fix that could have been fixed three years ago. However, they keep that regulation, that red tape, on the books so that the expense ever increases.

The other thing they don't tackle is cross-selling between craft breweries. I think that would be an excellent way for craft breweries to grow. If, per se, Bell's can sell Railway City or vice versa, that would increase the amount of craft beer throughout the province without costing the government a dime. All they have to do is take their pen out and scratch out those silly regulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to add some comments to the comments by my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane on this bill, the Better Business Climate Act.

The bill prescribes in schedule 1 that the Burden Reduction Reporting Act be enacted, "which requires the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to publish an annual report with respect to actions taken by the government of Ontario" to reduce regulatory burdens. I guess that's a good thing. We'd like to know exactly what actions are taken on behalf of the government to address or, at the very least, acknowledge some of the low-hanging fruit when it comes to regulatory burdens in our small, medium and even large-sized businesses in the province of Ontario. That's pretty reasonable.

"Schedule 2 enacts the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, which states that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure may"—as my colleague so clearly pointed out—"prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters." So they may do something, maybe. Maybe, they may do something.

I guess that's where we have some issues with the clarity of the bill or the vagaries that are built into the bill. One of those "mays" is: What is it, in fact, that they will be doing? We know that there are regulatory burdens that exist within all ministries and all sectors. Who, indeed, will be in charge of initiating or championing the review of those burdens? Then, what measures will be needed within those ministries to actually do something about those burdens? It's incredibly complex. We know that regulatory burden is certainly something that the business community has been talking about for quite some time.

We need to look at a whole suite of issues ranging from the fact that we have people who—income inequality. Business needs customers. That was clearly articulated in a TD report just recently released. Let's look at all of the tools that are available in this Legislature and try to do something constructive and proactive.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I was listening to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and he asked some of the same questions I asked about this bill. What's this bill about? I know he was quite interested in the title. I wasn't that interested in the title, but what I found out about it is that essentially what it's doing is responding to a request from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Toronto Board of Trade and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association. What they wanted was a reporting mechanism; they said, "You say you're reducing red tape. You can say you're doing it, but show us." So now they're going to be reporting what they're eliminating. It's a reporting mechanism. It's the same thing they do in Alberta and BC. That's the first part of it.

0930

The second part of it is basically—I think you've raised a good question: What comes first, the chicken or the egg? The cluster by itself, or does government create clusters? And I think on that part, what this bill is going to try to do is try to give the minister a bit more power to encourage and essentially facilitate cluster building and enhance what they've already done or what they're going to do. You said you've got an agricultural service cluster in Temiskaming Shores. I think there are these clusters all over the province these days. So what can the government really do to ensure that these clusters get the connection with government that they need, rather than creating them by themselves? It's some kind of help, facilitation of something that's already going on. Hopefully, by clearing this up to a certain extent, there will be a better connection between government and clusters so they can get a bit of help from the government as they

expand, as they service people in the area. That's my understanding of it, anyway.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the original debater, the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, for his final wrap-up.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to thank the members from Ottawa-Orléans, from Elgin-Middlesex-London, from Essex and from Eglinton-Lawrence.

To the member from Ottawa-Orléans: She made a point of talking about all the things that this government has done or that she thinks this government has done. She may have a point on some of them. But specifically this bill doesn't necessarily move that along.

The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London pointed out some concrete things that he feels could be done right now, and he has a point. This bill doesn't really move that along.

I appreciate what the member from Essex said, but I'd like to focus on what the member from Eglinton-Lawrence said. He did explain the purpose, in his mind, what the bill is about. I somewhat agree, but there's nothing in here that really needs a bill. You don't need a law to create a report, and that's all that you're really doing here—or to help along clusters.

At the end of the day what this bill—and we should talk about this more in the House. The minister is given various regulation-making powers with respect to the plans. So we can talk about the title and we can talk about the bill, but basically it's the minister who makes the decisions. That's a big problem with this Legislature. I've learned, and hopefully the people in the back row on the other side will learn, that at the end of the day, as long as we keep doing this, this House never gets to review these regulations, never gets to find the good ones or the bad ones. At the end of the day, it's the minister. So all we're doing is debating the title.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise to speak to Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014. I just want to point out the word “reduction” in the title. My good friend the previous speaker mentioned that this was a very good title, a very nice title, but the word “reduction” doesn't need to appear in the title of the act because there is absolutely nothing in this bill that's going to reduce red tape.

It was also mentioned earlier that what we need to do for business in the province is to do a report so they can see it, because they don't really believe that red tape is being reduced. In my notes we'll be speaking a little bit about that. The fact is that I think the government would be much better served, and the people of Ontario would be much better served, if the people could actually see the red tape that's being reduced. You shouldn't have to report at the end of the year, “Look what we've done.” The business should be able to realize that there's less red tape that they are having to deal with.

In the first schedule of the act, it would require the minister to report annually on regulatory burdens and red

tape—they would have to say how many they reduced annually—but there's also a section of the act that identifies what red tape is. The minister first gets to decide whether it's red tape before he decides whether they're going to report on whether it has been reduced or not. In fact, you could say, “We don't have any red tape so obviously there's not much to report.”

We understand that red tape is not only frustrating for our businesses, taxpayers and municipalities, but that there's a real cost in terms of time, productivity and lost opportunity. In some cases, businesses are forced to hire experts just to deal with the red tape. In fact, it's estimated that red tape burdens cost businesses in this province over \$11 billion a year in productivity. As one small-business owner said, “We are constantly spending more and more time updating manuals, filling out paperwork and participating in government programs trying to make sure that all our programs and regulations are kept up to date and current. It has almost become a full-time job to manage those things.”

This government has now been in power for 11 years, and for most of those they have been agreeing that red tape is a problem. In fact, in 2008—six years ago—they launched the Open for Business initiative, but today red tape is still one of the biggest problems we hear about from the businesses in Ontario.

In a Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey from earlier this year, over one-third of its members found that the cost of regulatory compliance is so burdensome that they would not have gone into business if they had known about the actual impact of government regulations. CFIB Ontario's vice president said, “CFIB estimates that government red tape costs Ontario businesses a staggering \$11 billion a year, making it the second-highest small business concern, after taxes.”

Every year I do a survey of Oxford businesses. It gives me an opportunity to hear directly from them about the challenges they're facing. This year, 73% of respondents said that red tape has increased over the last four years, which is slightly higher than they reported in the last survey. Again, that comes to the part about reporting it: Maybe it would be helpful, and then even the government would see that they're not reducing it.

It's clear that this government's efforts to address the problems aren't working. I recently heard from one small business person in my riding who said, “While there are a number of reasons we have chosen to exit the business, one of the main ones was the endless barrage of ‘compliance’ to regulations, and the documentation required for those requirements. The continual increase in the size of government just leads to more regulation, which in turn continues to make it less possible for small businesses to survive in this province and country.”

I would like to believe that publicly reporting the red tape burden and the government's progress will make a difference, but in 2012 this minister launched a consultation with small businesses and at the end he issued a report that found that, “Common themes began to emerge: complicated and burdensome application processes; out-

dated requirements; lack of clarity and understanding of compliance requirements; complaints related to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB); and support for one-window access to programs and information.”

Two years later, red tape is still the biggest issue facing our businesses, our non-profit organizations, and our municipalities.

I hope that by legislating the requirement to report annually we will see more attention on the impact of these burdens, but passing legislation can only do so much. Last year, the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing says that one of the provincial responsibilities is to produce an annual report on province-wide programs, but four years later we have not yet seen a single report.

Several weeks ago we marked the one-year anniversary of the Local Food Act being passed by this Legislature. The legislation contained a number of requirements for the government to complete within one year, such as creating targets for access to local food, local food procurement and food literacy, as well as a requirement for an annual report on local food. This government avoided the requirements simply by not proclaiming those sections. In fact, after a year, some sections of the Local Food Act still haven't been proclaimed.

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It has become a frequent occurrence for annual reports to arrive late. Often, we receive two or three annual reports from an organization at the same time. Sometimes, the government seems to just ignore the requirement for annual reports. For instance, Ontario Place hasn't submitted an annual report since 2010. As we debate the future of that property, wouldn't it be useful for everyone to be able to see the report from its last year of operation?

When the Minister of Tourism appeared at the estimates a few months ago, he was also unable to explain why the annual reports of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for 2011 and 2012 hadn't been tabled, even though it is a legislative requirement.

According to the deputy minister, the 2012 and 2013 annual reports from all 16 of the agencies under their ministry that are required to table them were in progress. That means, in spite of the legislative requirement for these reports, 17 months after fiscal year-end, they still hadn't been tabled.

I hope that this time, the government will follow through, that they will report back each year as required, and that they will provide an honest assessment of the burden facing Ontarians. But with all that, Mr. Speaker, I have to question it.

Another one of my concerns is the definition of the burden, and I think this is very important. The minister has to report “a cost that may be measured in terms of money, time or resources and is considered”—and this is important—“by the minister in consultation with other members of the government of Ontario to be unnecessary to achieve the purpose of the statutory, regulatory, pro-

cedural, administrative or other requirement that creates the cost....”

I'm sure everybody that was bothered by the regulations in the breweries is—

Interjection: The craft breweries.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman:—the craft breweries will be very impressed with that definition, because it will do absolutely nothing to deal with the problems they're facing with their red tape.

This means that the government doesn't have to report paperwork or regulatory requirements if they simply deem them necessary. Every regulation was considered necessary by some person at some point in time. This approach doesn't take into account the impact of these requirements on business. It doesn't force the government to look at how much time and productivity they are costing, and it doesn't push the government to reduce the overall burden.

As the Ontario Chamber of Commerce stated in their report *Emerging Stronger*—and incidentally, they issue the report each year—“The cumulative regulatory burden on business should be reduced to improve Ontario's business climate.”

As the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association said, “There are specific regulations in place that need attention but the overall consensus of industry operators is about the whole package of well-intended regulations that need to be there but create nightmares in the amount of paperwork and supportive documentation requirements.

“Many well-intended regulations demand an abundance of documented policies and posters on the walls, another ‘binder’ on the shelf and a significant amount of time and effort into paperwork completion.”

This definition of “burden” contained in this bill is open to much interpretation, which means that there could be efforts to reduce the red tape burdens reported which don't actually reduce the impact of regulations on Ontario.

Several years ago, I obtained an internal memo from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. It was advice to civil servants on how to implement the Open for Business initiative. That memo recommended removing the duplication between regulations, which sounds good, except that it says, “Numerous regulations detail processes and requirements related to tribunals. Rather than having those requirements within each regulation, include them within a single regulation and then reference those requirements.”

That would reduce the number of regulations that the government has to report, but it doesn't do anything to reduce the burden to Ontarians' businesses.

The memo went on to recommend moving requirements to forms, because “Forms were not included in the count, per Open for Business. Rather than stating within a regulation that a stakeholder must submit his name, address and phone number (three requirements), simply state that the stakeholder must complete the form (one requirement). That form could then require the name, address and phone number.”

It also recommends changing the definitions to reduce the burden count. "For instance, if a regulation required 'sheep, cattle and goats to be shaved and branded,' we would count six burdens, based on the multiplier of two requirements on three types of livestock. However, if the regulation stated that 'livestock must be shaved and branded,' it would count as two requirements; but presumably, in this scenario, livestock would be defined within the definition section as being sheep, cattle and goats." So, in fact, it changed absolutely nothing.

The memo recommends tricks like changing the wording from requiring an annual report to be prepared and submitted, which would be two burdens, to requiring the annual report to be submitted, which only counts as one burden, or moving the requirements into commission regulations, which the government decided not to include in the burden count.

I raised that memo in this Legislature, and the only response from the minister was to issue an internal memo to staff, warning them not to share internal information. There was no attempt to address the fact that people were deliberately trying to mislead the public into thinking that the regulatory burden had been reduced.

When we surveyed Ontario's farmers, 77.2% of respondents said that red tape is increasing. In fact, they reported that, on average, Ontario farmers spend 154.2 hours a year just filling out government forms, the equivalent of about four standard 40-hour work weeks.

In response to the survey, a farmer from the Golden Horseshoe said, "Costs of all businesses in Ontario is too high due to overregulation and red tape. A reckoning will have to come for Ontario to stay competitive at all."

When the government boasts about how many burdens they have reduced, we have to ask ourselves how many were just wording changes or moving the burden from one place to another.

If this is an example of how seriously the government took their effort to cut red tape, we shouldn't be surprised that it is still a significant problem. And if they are taking that same approach with this new act, the results won't be much better.

This red tape burden not only impacts business; it also impacts municipalities across Ontario. Every regulation and reporting requirement takes time for municipalities to fulfill. Some require significant expenditures to comply with the new regulations and legislation. While some of these burdens are necessary, it is still important to measure the overall burden they place on municipalities.

As the Rural Ontario Municipal Association—another organization that puts out reports—said in their report *A Voice for Rural and Northern Ontario*, "A frequent challenge faced by rural and northern municipalities is overregulation. Often when new policies are released, there are a number of new requirements attached, from administrative requirements to new responsibilities. While large urban municipalities also object to these additions, these municipalities are often in a position where they are able to comply (at a cost to the taxpayer)," of course. "Per capita costs in most rural and northern areas are

higher than those in urban communities as a result of smaller populations. As a result, rural and northern municipalities do not have the capacity, or the tax base, to continue to absorb new costs."

They also explained the difficulty that some of these smaller municipalities have in accessing provincial programs. It says, "The obstacle is in ensuring that those communities who could truly benefit from the programs are able to apply. Reducing the 'red tape' and the burden of eligibility and application procedures of current and future programs of interest for rural communities and municipalities could dramatically increase the functionality and uptake of these programs."

Just last week, we heard about a red tape burden that the province is putting on municipalities who are applying for assistance to help with the costs they had incurred because of last year's ice storm. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is requiring municipal staff to complete a two-hour seminar on how to fill out the paperwork before they can submit it. The seminar isn't even put on by the ministry staff; they have hired LandLink Consulting to do it for them.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first round of paperwork that they've done for that same project. Some municipalities are reporting this is now the third round of paperwork they are being required to submit. In fact, in their frequently asked questions on the program, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, "Municipalities and conservation authorities will likely need to devote a significant amount of time in assembling their claims."

These forms and guidelines aren't even online. Municipalities are required to contact a local municipal affairs office to obtain them. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't show any desire to reduce red tape or to respect the limited resources of our municipalities.

The other part of this act is that it would allow the government to create clusters. As the minister said in his leadoff, the development and success of these clusters has been driven by the private sector, which makes it concerning that the government is giving themselves more ability to create regulation surrounding the clusters. They're already being built by the private sector; now the government says, "There go my people. I better run so I can lead them." While I realize the government's intentions are good, I hope they will recognize that often the key to economic success is to get out of the way of the private sector. I hope that they will not use this regulation-making ability to create more red tape or implement restrictions that will end up causing new challenges and burdens for our businesses.

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Our critic for economic development, employment and infrastructure said in his leadoff that we will be supporting this bill. It may have sounded like I wasn't going to but, yes, I will be supporting this bill. But again, as was said in the earlier comments, because of its nice title and the fact that—what do they say? Hope springs eternal? I hope that at the end of this, the government will finally realize that if they go to this much trouble to

introduce a bill that does nothing but obligate them to do a report, they will actually come through and do that report.

We have pushed this government for years to make a meaningful reduction to the burdens placed on our businesses, our municipalities and our taxpayers. We are pleased to see them take this step, and we'll be watching to ensure that they follow through. Again, I say that the act is to create a report, but I would hope, as they're creating it and as they decide what a burden is, that they turn around and actually eliminate that burden, rather than just tell us that it's there and they'll do that next year.

I just want to end with this: Many years ago there was a provincial election, and I remember that one of the parties—the better of the parties, in my opinion—said, “We’re going to reduce red tape and we’re going to appoint a person, a Red Tape Commission”—I believe the former member from London West, Mr. Wood, was the chair of the Red Tape Commission—“to look at finding the redundant and unproductive regulations or legislation and remove them.”

Not to be outdone, the other party came up with, “We are going to reduce 50% of the red tape.” I remember going door to door in my riding and saying, “Now, think about this for a minute: Red tape is totally redundant and useless legislation that is not accomplishing anything of benefit. If you know how much there is, why would you only reduce 50% of it?” I think that's really the problem that we're seeing here: that they're looking at reporting, but are they actually looking at reducing it to benefit our businesses?

Going back to the start of the presentation—I think somewhere here I have a copy of the bill. It's An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act. I do hope that if they move forward on the reporting and also look at reducing the red tape, they actually may be able to assist in the partnership to help create jobs in Ontario, because the way they're doing it now, it isn't working.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to address the comments made by my colleague from Oxford and also to add more to what we heard earlier from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane speaking on Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

Burden reduction sounds good. Partnership sounds good. However, this bill addresses clusters, regions of activity where related businesses work together to thrive. We know that when businesses do well, communities do well; people do well. Coming from Oshawa, of course we have a famous cluster. Our most famous would be our automotive cluster. We've seen through the years how a cluster can become a part of that community. It's the government's role to help our businesses grow and reduce obstacles—fairly reduce obstacles—and hurdles. I think that's a good thing.

While we're at it, the government could also consistently encourage a climate of fairness to workers in terms of wages, in terms of training, in terms of health and safety or paid internships—and education, while we're at it. It does take more, though, than a bill to convince anyone, so this government needs to philosophically believe in opportunities for growth, philosophically believe in opportunities for growth of clusters, and community growth as well.

We need a climate where businesses can flourish and collaborate. We need a climate that businesses are attracted to. We would like to see a resurgence of faith in Oshawa and encouragement for businesses. Government needs to support the development of our regional clusters, needs to listen to key stakeholders, and reducing unnecessary government regulations that can deter businesses from coming to Ontario sounds like a step in the right direction.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Oshawa.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I was interested in listening to my colleague from Oxford talk about the challenges that people face with regulation etc. I think he made some very legitimate references about the reality that people face, especially in an agricultural community.

I just want to say that what the bill itself tries to do is to essentially put some kind of accountability in this attempt to reduce regulation and eliminate so-called red tape, because as governments can say they're going to reduce this, this is again a request from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Toronto Board of Trade, saying, “Listen, we want accountability.” So that's what this act does on that red tape aspect.

The second thing, in terms of clusters, is that clusters sometimes come about organically, but sometimes they need help from government. I know I have a very successful clothing manufacturing cluster in my riding. We manufacture one of the best winter coats you can buy anywhere in the world, and that's manufactured by Canada Goose. Canada Goose even sells winter coats to China; they sell winter coats to 50 different countries. They manufacture them in Ontario, in Toronto, with about 350 people, and they're going to expand to 500 people, because it's such a good-quality, Canadian-made coat. So if you're going to buy a coat for Christmas, buy a Canadian-made coat; don't buy those cheap imports. I'll give you a reference; you can come and buy a Canada Goose coat. It's expensive, but they're good quality. So don't go to Walmart and buy your coat; buy one locally, made in Chatham–Kent, made in Timiskaming, made in Oxford.

That's what we're trying to improve with this cluster support in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Further questions and comments? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Very good, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

It's always an honour to follow the member from Oxford and his insight. He's been in the Legislature for a few more years than I have is and has done a lot of work, especially in the agricultural sector and municipal affairs before, and now municipal affairs critic.

He mentioned the perfect examples of what we experience in our ridings, especially in the agricultural sector. We also went out and did business surveys, and the member came and visited, in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Sunderland Co-op, a perfect example of the redundancies that the agriculture community have to fill out in their forms, in their regulations. It's time-consuming. He mentioned \$11 billion lost in productivity because of red tape. It's the second-highest concern of small businesses across the province, not just in agriculture.

He mentioned in detail the forms that were to be filled out and how it actually misled the public in saying, "We have reduced red tape, we reduced the forms, we reduced regulation," where in fact it had not; it increased it. His survey said that 77.2%, I believe, of respondents from the agricultural community said red tape has increased, at an average cost of 154.2 hours per year in paperwork, which is a loss of doing what they do best: producing the quality food that we want to eat, and growing their businesses.

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The CFIB, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce—I mean, the message has been consistent: The cost of doing business in Ontario is too high to stay competitive.

I debated this Bill 7 yesterday. Really, it's "Maybe we'll do something, but we'll put it out there with a good title and hope it all works out in the end." Really, Mr. Speaker, we don't have confidence that it will.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'm pleased to stand and add my comments to those of the member from Oxford and also my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

As he pointed out, this bill has a really strong title, but it's not necessarily a strong bill. The bill states that the minister may take action, but there is no commitment to actually taking action. It suggests that the government may do something that they already do. We're saying that we're giving them power to do something that they already have the power to do, so I'm not quite sure of the point of introducing a bill.

The bill speaks to clusters, which is a good thing. However, in my riding of Windsor West, people want to hear about and also see action around our automotive and manufacturing clusters.

We welcome new ideas, we welcome new technologies, and we certainly welcome new businesses. But equally important to my riding and the neighbouring ridings of Windsor-Tecumseh and also Essex are the automotive and the manufacturing sectors. As the member from Oshawa had pointed out, it's important to her riding as well, and I'm sure that it's equally important to ridings all over Ontario.

If the government is going to bring forth bills to create a better business climate, then they should be developing

bills that actually require action and not just suggest that it may happen or that they're going to write reports about it.

I believe that this bill actually adds to the red tape. Again, we're talking about a bill that's giving the government the ability to do something they already do, so it's kind of a redundant bill.

As I pointed out, I believe that there needs to be a strong plan around not only creating a better business climate but attracting businesses to my riding and ridings all across Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now we'll go back to the member from Oxford for his final wrap-up.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Oshawa, Eglinton-Lawrence, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, and Windsor West for their comments.

I just wanted to add a couple of comments. The member from Eglinton-Lawrence mentioned, and I agree with him, that it's good to look at reporting and so forth. But I do believe, and I stand to be corrected, that the Open for Business legislation that went through this House a number of years ago in fact required each individual minister to report as to how they were making out.

The main part that I was a little concerned with is the working—and he said the government needs to help the private sector build these clusters, and I totally agree, but the minister says that the private sector is already doing it. Then, when I look at the explanatory note—and I think that's the important part, Mr. Speaker—in the schedule it states that "the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure may prepare plans with respect to the development of clusters." These are the minister's plans.

"As part of the preparation of a plan, the minister must consult, as he or she considers advisable, with persons or entities that have an interest in the development of the cluster." In that part, it doesn't even say he has to talk to anyone. He is making the plan.

"The minister is required to review the plan"—this is the same plan—"and make public a report with respect to the results of the review. The minister is given various regulation-making powers with respect to the plans."

It was mentioned by the last speaker, from Windsor, in fact, that this is nothing but red tape. I mean, gosh, the minister gets to make a plan and to talk to whoever he wishes to talk to, or no one. Then he gets to review his plan and then he gets to report it to the people of Ontario: "I have prepared a plan and I reviewed it. It was the best plan that ever existed. Now here it is"—end of story.

I think that's red tape if I ever saw it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I would love to add my voice to the debate. We are debating Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

Essentially, this bill has two parts to it, two sections. Part 1 talks about reporting on regulatory burden reduc-

tion—so red tape reduction, burden reduction, regulation reduction. Part 2 talks about clusters.

I think it's important to understand what a cluster is, in a simple term. Clusters are basically—in a particular geographic area, in a particular region, there are similar businesses and they work together. There is a synergy between these businesses. So the bill has two components: talking about regulations and talking about, in certain regions, certain areas, where there are similar businesses that work together—how do you promote them? Okay. That's what the bill purports to do.

The bill has an okay name. It's somewhat factual to what it is actually going to do.

Here is the issue: There's not anything really that is overly opposable in this bill, but there's not really anything very supportable in this bill. The reason why I say this is because everything in this bill—everything—can be done already without a bill. There is nothing in this piece of legislation that you actually need legislation to be able to do. Let me clarify: The minister can currently report—any ministry can report on anything they want, anytime they want. So you don't need a bill to be able to report on anything. You want to report on the steps you are taking to help the environment. You can report. Tell us. Why not? You want to take some steps to improve the employment standards or employment regulations or streamline them. You can report that. There is nothing barring you from doing that.

This bill talks about the steps you are going to take to report on steps you're going to take to reduce regulations. You can do that. I don't think you need a bill to do that. I'm actually very certain you don't need a bill to do that. I'll give some of my suggestions in terms of the direction you should go. But let's just be very clear: There is absolutely nothing—and I've reviewed this quite thoroughly. There are no additional powers in this bill that you don't already have through regulation-making authority. You already have, as a government—any government would have—significant regulation-making authority. So you are not increasing that. There is nothing really significant in schedule 1, or schedule 2 for that matter, but let's focus on schedule 1.

Before I continue too far, I'm sharing my time with the member from London West. Please make note of that. Thank you so much, kindly.

There are certain regulations that we absolutely need. So when we talk about streamlining the process for a business to be successful, we absolutely support that. We support businesses doing well. We know that businesses have often a lot of difficulty navigating all the different rules and regulations that do apply to them, and that's something that we need to help businesses with.

I also ran my own law practice, and I know that it's important to make sure that businesses are able to move and navigate the different laws and different regulations that exist. We need to encourage businesses by making it easier for them to be able to set up and to develop and to flourish.

But that being said, we absolutely need to be very vigilant around two areas where regulations are very,

very crucial and important. Where it comes to the environment, we need to make sure that we properly consult with experts in the field to make sure that our regulations around environmental standards are maintained and protected. And employment standards—we need to maintain appropriate employment standards to ensure that people in Ontario are protected and that in their workplace they are safe and they are secure. So those are two areas where it is absolutely crucial to have regulations. We need to make sure that we're doing the right things in terms of the environment and we're doing the right things in terms of our people. Those are two areas where we certainly want to see proper, enforced and thoughtful regulations. But, in general, of course, if there are areas that are redundant, if there are areas that are non-essential, if there are areas that are putting an extra burden on businesses that aren't improving the environment and aren't improving employment standards—and why are they there in the first place—we absolutely support streamlining those.

With respect to the second schedule, it talks about clusters. "Clusters" is simplified terminology for geographically similar businesses concentrated in an area. Obviously, when clusters are successful, that's a great thing for our economy, and it's great for a particular region. Some of my colleagues spoke about their particular regions. It's great to have the automotive sector in southwestern Ontario, and the fact that there are surrounding businesses that support each other, that work together, whether it's different parts or different manufacturers working with the automotive industry to build a cluster base—and it's a great source of employment.

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What is the government going to do, though? The bill's quite interesting. It talks about what kind of ideas should be in the plan; it talks about the steps they're going to take to prepare a plan; if they don't want to go ahead with the plan, it talks about how to stop the plan; and it talks about reviewing the plan. But it doesn't actually have a plan; it's all the steps around an actual plan. So we're not voting on a plan. They might say, "To create a cluster, we need to invest in uranium. That's our plan to create clusters." There might be no connection with their plan and the actual cluster. They can say anything. The plan is not here. We're not voting on any plan. We're voting on what should maybe be in a plan. We're voting on how they can prepare that. We're voting on amendments, how you can change that plan, how it could be reviewed or how it could be stopped. But there isn't a plan here; there isn't a strategy here.

A number of folks have talked about a particular strategy on developing clusters, that this is a specific way that government can actually encourage a cluster. There are ways. There are a number of factors that go into promoting a particular sector. For example, right now we see a lot of start-up companies in the technology field. We had a recent event in Toronto, which was a phenomenal event. It was a Start-up Open House. They had all the start-ups in Toronto basically open their doors to the public. We had phenomenal start-ups doing great work

around new, innovative bicycles. We had start-ups doing work around various web-based applications, coming up with new apps. We had some really amazing start-ups. They're all clustered together around certain parts of the city. I'll give you some examples of what we can actually implement to help these out.

One thing that cluster-type businesses could benefit from is infrastructure. If we invested in good infrastructure to help these businesses move around, to help them move their services around, to help them physically get around, to help them move their products around, that would be a plan. If there was a specific plan saying, "We need to invest in increasing investments in infrastructure with a view to supporting certain clustered businesses or certain regions that already have existing businesses that need to move around quickly"—

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's not in this plan, though. It doesn't say, "We will implement an increase in funding for infrastructure in this particular region." It just vaguely talks about steps to come up with a plan, then to review this plan and then to discuss how to end this plan. It's odd. There's nothing wrong with it, but there's nothing right with it either. You can just do this anyways. It speaks to what I've brought up before: What are the priorities of this government? When we have a number of issues that are pressing, that are of great concern, why bring forward a bill that has so little in it, that doesn't actually increase the powers of the government already? They don't provide new powers. You already can report. You can already take steps to improve businesses that are clustering. There's actually nothing innovative in this bill. There's nothing new in this bill. There's nothing that gives additional powers that don't already exist in this bill.

There are other bills, though, that I think we need. For example, the anti-SLAPP legislation was something crucial. That was something that would encourage democracy. That bill was not brought forth. Why is this government not prioritizing democracy? The fact that people need to voice their concerns, voice their dissent—and folks who do so are being hit with strategic lawsuits that discourage their public participation. Why didn't that bill come forward instead of this bill which, again, sounds great, but doesn't provide anything of substance, doesn't provide anything new?

I note that we're close to the time, so I'm happy to end my comments here and pick them up afterwards.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. It's also duly noted that you were sharing your time with the member from Windsor West. So when debate resumes, I would assume it will be with—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The member from London West.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry, London West. Forgive me on that.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now 10:15, this House will recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

WEARING OF SCARVES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Community and Social Services on a point of order.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent for members to wear purple scarves in recognition of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Community and Social Services is seeking unanimous consent to wear the scarves. Do we agree? Agreed.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services on a point of order.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good morning, Speaker. I believe you will find we also have unanimous consent to wear white ribbons in the House. Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, as designated by the United Nations. It's also the first day of 16 days of activism against gender violence. In recognition of this day, we have available to MPPs white ribbons, an international symbol and a pledge to end violence against women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services and minister responsible for women's issues is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbon. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

It is now time for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to introduce page captain Joshua Liao. He has some family here today: his mother, Michele Curry; his father, Dr. Liang Liao; his stepmother, Marlene Buwala-Liao; and his grandmother, Ching Tzu Liao. They will be in the gallery later and we thank them very much on behalf of Norm Miller, my colleague from the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, who wasn't able to be here.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please help me welcome the presidents and the board chairs of Ontario's 24 colleges to the Ontario Legislature. They're going to have an event this afternoon from 5:30 to 7:30 in rooms 228 and 230. I invite and encourage all members to participate in this wonderful event. There will be a musical performance, performed by the students of our great colleges in Ontario. Please join me in welcoming the presidents and the board chairs.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's my pleasure to welcome some wonderful people from my riding and from eastern Ontario. They're representing the Ontario Real Estate Association and they are here to be entertained at question period this morning. We have Paul Martin, Christianne Newton and Lisa Cyr-Auld joining us today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's my pleasure to welcome Don Lovisa. He's the president of Durham College. It's wonderful to have you here at Queen's Park today.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Brampton West, I'm pleased to introduce in the public gallery this morning Mr. Rodney Vis, who is the father of page Tyler Vis. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a great pleasure to welcome, in the east gallery, from Loyalist College, Maureen Piercy, president, and Brian Smith, the chair. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'd like to welcome the family of page captain Claudia Velimirovic: her mother, Daphne Velimirovic; her father, George Velimirovic; her sister, Julia Velimirovic; and her brother, Nicholas Velimirovic. They are in the members' gallery.

I also want to welcome the grade 10 class from Bishop Allen Academy in Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I saw coming in today Peter Devlin, president of Fanshawe College in London. Welcome, Peter, to the Legislature today.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to welcome Lorne Rachlis, who is a member of my community in Ottawa Centre and also the former director of education of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, and his son, Joshua Rachlis, who are with us here today. Thank you and welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome Glenn Vollebregt, the president of St. Lawrence College; Steve Thompson, the board chair at St. Lawrence College; and also Chris Yaccato, who is becoming a permanent fixture in this House.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I noticed this morning that the president of St. Clair College Windsor is in the gallery this morning. Welcome, John Strasser.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I would like to recognize all of the Violence Against Women stakeholders and advocates who have joined us today at Queen's Park. Among them, in the east members' gallery, are Anne Armstrong, chair of the Ontario Executive Directors Group; Charlene Catchpole, chair of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses; and Clare Freeman from Interval House.

In recognition of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, you will see these advocates wearing purple scarves as part of the Wrapped in Courage campaign. We invite all members to join us on the grand staircase following question period for a photo in our purple scarves.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm pleased to welcome to the House today Diane Beaulieu, the executive director of Halton Women's Place. Further to the minister's statement, all of these women are here today with respect to the Violence Against Women sector and in recognition of the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Welcome, Diane.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, social-political entrepreneur extraordinaire Josh Rachlis.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Please help me welcome to the Legislative Assembly, from the Thunder Bay real estate association, Ms. Wendy Ferris.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to welcome to the Legislature Ann Buller, the president of Centennial College, in my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood. I also noticed my friend David Agnew, president of Seneca College.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to give a warm welcome to four members from the Ottawa Real Estate Board: Janice Myers, executive officer; Patricia Verge; Rick Snell; and Janie Bilder.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Bernnitta Hawkins is in the public gallery. She is also a member of the Red Scarf Brigade and is the executive director of the Red Door Shelter. David Bellmore, who has joined me as a constituency and legislative assistant, is in the members' gallery opposite. Thank you, David. Welcome.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to introduce my former deputy minister, government services, and the new president of Mohawk College, Mr. Ron McKerie.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome the president of Georgian College, MaryLynn West-Moynes, and the chair of Georgian College, Chris Garipey.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: As part of this special day, for which we are wearing the purple scarves, I want to introduce Debbie Zweep, who is the executive director of the Faye Peterson Transition House in Thunder Bay. Welcome, Debbie.

Mr. Han Dong: I want to give a personal warm welcome to my good friend and former colleague Chris Yaccato. I know his name was mentioned earlier, but I just want to give my personal welcome to him.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery with us today is a friend of mine, and also a former member of the Canadian Parliament for Haldimand-Norfolk who served from 1988 to 2004, Mr. Bob Speller. Welcome, Bob.

Also in the Speaker's gallery—and I'm glad somebody didn't step on this for me—a friend of mine and a friend of ours, from the riding of Fort York in the 35th and 36th, and Trinity-Spadina in the 37th, 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments, Mr. Rosario Marchese.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Get it all out now.

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BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that in accordance with Section 87 of the Legislative Assembly Act, the following changes in the names of persons appointed to serve as commissioners on the Board of Internal Economy have been communicated to me as chair of the Board of Internal Economy:

The Honourable Yasir Naqvi, MPP, is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council in the place of John Milloy;

Yvan Baker, MPP, is appointed by the caucus of the government in the place of Donna Cansfield; and

John Vanthof, MPP, is appointed by the caucus of the New Democratic Party in place of Cindy Forster, MPP.

Sylvia Jones, MPP, continues to serve as a commissioner on the appointment of the caucus of the official opposition.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Some continuity at least.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would hope that at least during an announcement like this, I could avoid somebody interjecting.

A point of order from the member for Nickel Belt.

VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Some of my guests came in late. Rob Ruthart and Mary Scourboutakos, who helped me introduce Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating this morning, are with us at Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, winter is just around the corner, and all across Ontario, residents and small businesses are worried about their ability to pay their hydro bills. A senior living on a fixed income and heating their house electrically, which many of them are, doesn't know how they're going to meet the obligation. While air-conditioning is not necessarily essential, heating most definitely is. For some—and I get this from people in my riding all the time—their electricity bills are higher than their old-age pension. Peak rates, under your plans, are now 14 cents a kilowatt hour, and that doesn't include all of the added surcharges as a result of your energy policies.

Minister, your policies have taken Ontario from one of the lowest-cost electricity jurisdictions to one of the highest. Are you going to continue to punish our residents and ratepayers, or like winter, is a change in energy policy just around the corner as well?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, the member will know that when our government took over in 2003, we had a deficit of electricity, we had a dirty system, and the system was unreliable.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I would ask for order, please. Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Over the course of the last nine years, we rebuilt the system with about \$30 billion in transmission and generation costs. We have moved from a deficit of electricity to a surplus, from a dirty system to a clean system.

That put pressure on prices. Those price pressures were in our long-term energy plan in 2010 and 2013; they were there for everybody to see. We took very significant mitigation measures, which those parties voted against. That includes the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit

and the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit, saving qualifying individuals up to \$963 per year.

In the supplementaries, I'll talk about the other issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, you give with one hand; you take away with the other. That is cold comfort to those seniors who don't know how they're going to pay their bills this winter—pun intended. Shame on you. You can do better than that.

In estimates this morning, it was clearly pointed out to you that hydro rates—all in—in the province of Manitoba are one third what they are in Ontario; in British Columbia, one half. How can you explain to the people living on that fixed income how they pay that much more in Ontario? It is because of your energy policies—your failed policies. You have decided to choose the most expensive options when replacing coal in the province of Ontario.

That has also led to the loss of 300,000 manufacturing jobs—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Oh, come on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, yes, 300,000 manufacturing jobs here across the province of Ontario. Your policies are driving businesses away.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron—Bruce, come to order. The Minister of Finance, come to order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Go get 'em, John.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville, come to order. And I'm keeping count. Wrap up, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Companies like Heinz, Caterpillar and Xstrata have all cited energy prices as reasons for leaving the province of Ontario. When are you going to get the message? Stop listening to your minions over there—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Businesses will come and go in Ontario. The reality is that there are more coming in than are leaving. It's very significant.

We have the highest rate of investment capital of any jurisdiction in North America—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to get attention, one way or the other.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham—Kent—Essex will come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member knows well that we have implemented a very significant number of programs to assist businesses to come to Ontario with reduced electricity costs and to stay here. The ICI, the industrial conservation initiative, has just been expanded, with probably upwards of 300 companies receiving a 20%

discount on their electricity. There are other programs, which I'll mention in my next supplementary.

We have taken significant steps to mitigate prices, because the price pressures came from us investing because of the damage that they did—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Businesses come and go: That's quite an answer. Well, they're going at about a 10-to-1 ratio, Minister. That's not very good on your part.

Minister, those companies that are coming here because you're giving them a one-off probably appreciate that, but they know that that is at the cost of everybody else in the province of Ontario.

Xstrata, Caterpillar, Heinz: They cite energy costs as a reason for leaving. I have not heard one single business ever say, "We're coming to Ontario because of its energy policy"—not one. They may come here in spite of your energy policy, because they know you're giving them a one-off handout.

Minister, last month, the IESO said that the global adjustment, that little-understood little trick of yours, amounted to over \$1 billion. That is the cost, the difference between the value of electricity purchased and the amount you have paid to your contractors, the amount you have paid for electricity. The difference between its value and what you paid is \$1 billion.

That goes on everybody's hydro bill. That is driving people out of this province, and that is driving seniors into poverty. When will you reverse the policies?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have one of the best job-creation records in this province. That's number one.

Number two, there are more businesses coming here and investing money than in any other jurisdiction in North America.

Ontario's industrial rates compare favourably with other jurisdictions, despite what the PCs claim. Industrial rates in northern Ontario are among the lowest in Canada, and lower than in 44 American states. Industrial rates in southern Ontario are lower than in Alberta, Michigan, New Jersey and California and in line with rates in New York, Virginia and Tennessee.

We have the programs to attract businesses and to create jobs in this province. They have no solutions in any shape whatsoever.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, you have not been clear whatsoever with the people of Ontario about the value of MaRS and that debacle.

CBRE appraised phase 2, if it was 100% leased, at \$303 million. We know that it's not fully leased, and a building filled with bureaucrats is not worth as much as one filled with research scientists. That's because the rental rates for office space is \$44 to \$45 per square foot. For research space, it's about \$60 a foot.

Minister, you've placed taxpayers at significant risk. Will you admit to this House that if phase 2 is filled with bureaucrats, the value of the building will be 25% less than the appraised value?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not really sure what the member is referring to when he says this government hasn't been clear when it comes to our way forward on this particular file. We've released 700 pages of documents publicly, so the member can have access to them. In fact, we've offered to the committee the opportunity to see all of those documents with absolutely no redactions. I think that's being pretty open. I think that's being transparent. I think that's being very clear.

We have also identified a path forward in seeking the best experts we can in our economy, Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, as we move forward. They have confirmed that the asset that we have lent money to MaRS phase 2 for is worth more than the investment we've made, which means what the member has just said is absolutely incorrect. I think what's unclear is the ability of the member to understand what a secured loan means.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Back to the expert panel response again.

Minister, mankind has often wondered if there is intelligent life on Mars. Well, you've proven that there's not at phase 2 or even in your ministry.

Let's recap the problem you've created for taxpayers. The value of the building is the land costs plus the leasing revenue. When the leasing rate drops, so does the revenue. When the revenue drops, so does the value of the building. When you go from charging \$60 a square foot to \$45 a square foot, the value drops by 25%.

Minister, will you admit that you will not be able to recover the \$405 million of taxpayers' money you've already sunk into MaRS phase 2?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the member may want to insult my intelligence. But look, I'm just a kid from Scarborough; I don't pretend I'm the smartest guy here. But I think if there was a vote taken in the House that compares the intelligence quotas of these two members who are exchanging right now, I'm not sure, but I think I might just edge him out in that respect.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, my God.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I may not—but let me say this: What we're supporting here is a part of our economy that is extremely important. Some 50% of our life sciences economy in Canada is located right here in Ontario. In and around that building, about 10% of the bioscience cluster is there.

This government stands by our bioscience cluster. This government is going to continue to make invest-

ments that are going to grow innovation in this province. The party opposite may want to not support those kinds of approaches. That's up to them. We're building the next-generation economy, we're creating jobs, and we're going to continue to make those important investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: There is no cluster there except a cluster of bureaucrats, Minister.

Let's recap the story here: There never was a business case. The private sector won't rent there. The banks and the investors won't touch MaRS 2—it's like an empty Taj Mahal, but full of bureaucrats, not tourists.

ARE got a \$65-million bailout. The taxpayers loaned \$224 million. Then the taxpayers are on the hook for another \$106 million in interest costs, and MaRS gets a free building that the taxpayer fills up and pays rent on. Minister, your responses have been lubricious, at least to this House, and this expert panel—I can't imagine that it was hired for anything other than to camouflage the slippery language that has been going on here.

Will their report be transparent about the obvious facts or will that expert panel simply shield you from further accountability to this House?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, the member's information is simply incorrect, as usual. I think what I want to do in responding is to suggest, what is his alternative? What's his party's alternative? Because from what he's saying, that party would have just let MaRS phase 2 rot in the ground. That would have been irresponsible.

What we've done is, we've made some important investments to ensure that this project could continue. We've taken the best advice from Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson to make sure we're moving forward in a way that's responsible to taxpayers, in a way that's responsible to our commitment to create jobs in this province. We're looking for further advice from those individuals, which we should receive very soon, and then we're looking to move forward on a project that had challenges, but challenges that we're going to fix to ensure that this project has a positive future. That is leadership.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, we learned that the Liberals are on track to fire 10,000 people. Does the Premier really think that now is the time to put out 10,000 pink slips?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the leader of the third party would have gotten that information, because that's not the case. Maybe she is confusing it with the platform of the Conservatives, but they were going to fire 100,000 people.

What we're doing is, we're engaging in negotiations. We believe in the collective bargaining process, and we are going to make sure that we have a good ongoing relationship with our public sector partners. We are going to continue to constrain salaries and benefits because we

know that that is important if we are to remain on our path to balance by 2017-18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is what the head of the Ontario public service union had to say about the Liberal plan for public service: "It is ... worse than anything Mike Harris tabled." That's a quote, Speaker. Now, the first step of this plan could mean 10,000 people get fired. Is the Premier really ready to hand out 10,000 pink slips and fire 10,000 Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What is going on right now is that negotiations are beginning with OPSEU. Everything I know about negotiation is that it is much better for the discussion to be at the table. To bargain in public and to start to make overblown statements about what is or isn't happening is not helpful. When I was in Thunder Bay on the weekend, I had the opportunity to talk to some folks who were expressing their opinion. On the driveway when I was leaving the venue, I had the opportunity to speak with some folks who are part of the union. I made it clear to them that it is our commitment to have a fair negotiating process at the bargaining table because we want a collective bargaining process that allows for a very good dialogue between the employer and the employee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, you may recall that Don Drummond said that the Liberal budget would mean the firing of 100,000 people. The Liberals are already privatizing information technology. We know that that's the case. People will be fired through that process. With the holidays around the corner, we now find out that the Liberals are getting ready to hand out 10,000 pink slips to Ontarians. Will the Premier tell Ontarians who exactly she's planning on firing?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am not going to engage in the fantasy that the leader of the third party—I'm not going to lend credibility to the numbers that the leader of the third party is throwing around, because that is simply not the case.

We are engaging in a collective bargaining process that will be fair, that will have integrity, at the bargaining table. We are not going to bargain in the media. It is not helpful, and it is certainly not helpful at the very beginning of the process. This is the beginning of the process. We want there to be an open dialogue between the employer and the employee so that there can be a good, solid, negotiated agreement. The leader of the third party, I would say with respect, is not advancing that process by her line of questioning.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. People suffer when services are cut, but the Premier's Minister of Health doesn't believe that cuts are real. He told a reporter he doesn't believe that patient care has suffered in Ontario. Health Quality Ontario, on

the other hand, says that one in seven hospital beds is occupied by people who would be better off in their homes or in long-term care. As a result, last week in Sudbury, ER wait times shot up and seven surgeries were cancelled.

Now, will the Premier, on behalf of the health minister, apologize to people whose surgeries were cancelled and set the record straight about the health care cuts in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to speak to the details of our plan, but let me just say that the leader of the third party has identified exactly why it is important for us to continue with the plan that we have in place, because our plan is transforming the health care system and is providing care for people at home, where they need it, when they need it. Are we in the middle of a transition? Is it clear that there is more that we have to do? Absolutely, but we're changing the model because, as the leader of the third party herself has said, people want care at home and will be better off if they get care at home in their communities. So that's what we're doing. We're investing in those services. It is clear that we have to make more investments, and it is clear that we have to work with the sector to make sure that people are getting timely care. That's what we're in the process of doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Patient care is suffering in this province, but this Liberal government refuses to admit that they're cutting the services that people rely on.

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Here's a news bulletin for the Premier: In Windsor, Essex and Sarnia, daily nursing visits have been cut by 33%. Those are services that people rely on, health care services that are being cut by this government. PSW services are being rolled back to 2013 levels.

But yesterday the minister claimed that these cuts to home care were simply not true. He called them myths and said there were no cuts at all. This is outrageous, for the minister to deny cuts that patients are actually experiencing, cuts that have been spelled out in black and white in CCACs' own board minutes.

How can the Premier and her minister have the audacity to deny that these cuts to patient care are happening under this Liberal government's watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to make it clear that, on this side of the House, we understand that the transition we're going through does mean there are changes to service that people may be experiencing. We're fully cognizant of that and we understand that it is part of the transition process.

But the leader of the third party would have people believe that somehow we don't have to go through this transition and somehow the aging population and, quite frankly, the demands that people make on the health care system—some of those demands are that they want to stay at home. People don't want to move into a long-term-care home or into kinds of living situations until they are ready.

For the leader of the third party to suggest that somehow we can just go through this transition, that there will be no change in service and that there will be no adjustment that has to be made, is just to lead people astray. It's not the case. We are investing. We invested more last year than we did the year before. We will continue to invest in that transformation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier can't have it both ways. She can't answer part one of my question and say, "We're putting the money into home care and PSWs," and then in the second question pretend that I didn't just say that there were major cuts to both PSWs and home care services. I don't understand what this Premier is trying to say.

It looks like changes equal cuts as far as the Liberals are concerned. Cuts to health care are real. They're happening under this government's watch and they're happening on purpose: cancelled surgeries in Sudbury, cutting nursing by a third in Windsor, chronic gridlock in the Thunder Bay hospital, more than half of sick people can't get in to see their doctors, seniors waiting 111 days for long-term care, and half of the patients in this province that suffer heart failure are not able to have their necessary one-week follow-up.

Does the Premier agree with her Minister of Health that health care cuts are not real and don't affect people?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Rather than listening to the leader of the third party with regards to her declarations about the state of health care, I would rather actually refer to Health Quality Ontario's report that just came out last week. It's important to point out that their report states that "Ontario's health system is performing better than it was five and 10 years ago." These are great indicators that our plan is working.

And it's just not true. We've increased—in fact, this year alone, nearly a quarter of a billion dollars invested in home and community care. We increased the Erie St. Clair CCAC's budget by \$3 million this year compared to last year. In fact, the funding to the Erie St. Clair LHIN has doubled since we came into power 10 years ago.

So the allegations that the leader of the third party is making are absolutely false. I think it's important that she recognize that the situation in Ontario is improving. Health care is of the highest quality it can be.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Ben Levin, from your transition team, has been charged with seven counts involving child pornography, some happening while he was working for you in early 2013. When you learned of these charges, what internal investigation was done to ensure no government property was used and/or compromised by Mr. Levin?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe that this is a case that is before the courts and I really cannot comment on

any of the details because, as I say, it's a current and active legal file.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Premier, I didn't ask about the police investigation; I asked about your investigation. Did you order an internal investigation when you learned of these seven charges? What assurances can you give us that government resources were not used to distribute or access child pornography while Ben Levin was on your transition team?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is a case that is before the courts; I cannot comment on any of the aspects of the case.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Good morning.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: In 2012, MaRS got a special innovation grant from the city of Toronto worth \$23 million over 10 years. One of the conditions of that grant was that 98% of the property had to be used for biomedical research. We now know the secret cabinet plan that authorized the first MaRS bailout said that more than half of the building would be used to staff the Ontario public service.

The question for the Premier is whether the Liberal government plans to break the deal with the city of Toronto and waste another \$23 million on MaRS.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the member knows that we have a couple of esteemed individuals, Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, taking a look at the opportunities forward in terms of the best way to protect the taxpayer investment and the best way to ensure that the innovation agenda and vision of MaRS can be continued. We're looking forward to getting those recommendations. I don't want to in any way step all over those recommendations before they come forward.

I've been very clear, and I think the member would be able to read through my comments here, that there has been no momentum whatsoever with regard to the idea of putting bureaucrats into MaRS phase 2. I've been very clear about that; there's no momentum behind that idea. But I don't want to prejudge what Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson bring forward. I want to make sure, and I've told them that I want their recommendations to be completely unfettered, as I expect them to be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The agreement with the city of Toronto is clear: 98% of the building must be used for biomedical and scientific research. If the conditions aren't met, the city can take back the \$23 million.

The Liberal government seems unclear on what they're going to do. To keep the grant, they need high-tech tenants, but they can't find high-tech tenants so they might use MaRS for office space, but then they would

lose the \$23 million. Which will it be? Will the Premier keep the building two thirds empty, or will she lose \$23 million?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I welcome the member's question, and I think I can read through his question that the NDP are in support of continuing to ensure that MaRS's vision continues, and that phase 2, in fact, as it moves forward, takes that into consideration. I think that's valid advice. I expect that may well be the advice we receive from Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson. I'm looking forward to that advice.

Certainly, this government remains committed to MaRS's vision. Certainly, we remain committed to ensuring the 51,000 jobs in the bioscience sector can remain to be supported. MaRS is an important part of our innovation agenda, so I take the member's question as support and a recommendation for us to continue to invest in MaRS's vision going forward. I'll be happy to receive the advice that we get from Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson going forward.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Attorney General. Attorney General, certain members of my constituency have expressed an interest in a piece of legislation, the Electronic Commerce Act, that relates to electronic signatures in real estate transactions. As most of us know, the purchase of a home is one of the most complex and time-consuming transactions a person can make. I, as well as some of my constituents, would like to know more details regarding this act.

Could the Attorney General please inform this House how the Electronic Commerce Act is making the sale and purchase of real estate easier and more efficient for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Let me say thank you to the member from Brampton-Springdale. She is right; the purchase of a home is a big moment in anybody's life. The idea behind the Electronic Commerce Act is to make this process more efficient.

Ontario's 2013 amendments to the Electronic Commerce Act will allow people to electronically sign paperwork and email it to their real estate agent. The proposed regulation would support the reliability of electronic signatures on agreements of purchase and sale of land by stipulating that each signature must be reliable for the purpose of identifying the person who signs, permanent, and accessible by people who are entitled to view it. These amendments are intended to reduce the time needed to complete a deal.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I thank the Attorney General for the answer. This is great news for my constituents, as the purchase of a home can be a stressful experience. Any opportunity to make the process more efficient and easier for individuals or families should be looked at. Since this is arguably the biggest purchase of an individ-

ual's or family's life, I feel as though the protection of our consumers should be paramount.

My only concern regarding this legislation is that of fraud. Speaker, through you to the Attorney General, could this House be informed on how the Electronic Commerce Act protects consumers from fraud, specifically regarding the use of electronic signatures?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you again for this important question. The issue of fraud is part of the reason we are currently in a consultation period until December 31. Lawyers and real estate agents are already required to verify the identity of their clients. These rules apply to electronic transactions as well as paper-based transactions and remain in effect. Whatever is approved for use must be safe, secure and easy to use for consumers and small businesses.

The real estate industry in Ontario has been requesting this change for some time, and we are pleased to be moving forward with it, so the deadline for comments is until December 31, 2014, and if people want to comment, we welcome their comments.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday we learned of the Minister of Transportation's \$61-million Pan/Parapan transportation plan. It featured lots and lots of encouragement for commuters to examine their commuting options, encouraging them to work flexible hours and stockpile supplies.

After spending \$61 million of taxpayers' money, the minister is asking them to stock up and stay home and off the roads. Is this the best advice he could come up with?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: While I thank the member for asking that question, it's unfortunate, I would think, that he didn't pay attention to all of the elements of the very ambitious and robust plan that we have to deal with transportation issues that will be occurring during the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

As I talked about, and as ministry officials talked about yesterday when speaking about this, we have a variety of options in front of us that we're presenting to the people of the region to make sure that not only are the games the extraordinary success that they will be, but that we also keep our region moving. The "transit first" approach, the additional temporary HOV lanes that will be made available, not just to people associated with the games themselves but to the public at large, the fact that we are, this many months in advance of the games, providing clear communications materials and letting people know what the challenges will be bodes well, and I look forward to responding with additional details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: The Wynne Liberals have had years to get this right, and yet we're left with a mixed bag of ingredients that add up to a recipe for traffic chaos. Not everybody can carpool or bicycle in, and flexible hours simply don't exist in some occupations.

Surely the minister knows that taking out 235 kilometres of current lanes from commuters for HOVs adds up to major traffic gridlock. Rush hours on reduced lanes will mean significant delays. That's obvious.

Speaker, the minister has the studies. Will he tell us today how long, on average, rush hour commuters will see their daily drive to work delayed during the games?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the supplementary question. I think it is important to recognize, as I said in the response to the initial question, that it is a very strong plan to make sure that the region continues to move throughout the games—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Leave on Tuesday, get there Wednesday. Bring a picnic basket.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got pushed. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, thanks. As I was saying, a very strong plan that the Ministry of Transportation has developed to make sure we can keep our region moving during the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games and also make sure that the games themselves are a success. It is important to stress, as I did yesterday during the briefing, that we have relied on working with more than 30 partners on developing this plan, that we have actually taken the best experiences from what has taken place around the world in jurisdictions that have hosted games. I am a little bit surprised that this particular critic would ask this question, seeing as how he didn't even show up to yesterday's technical briefing.

NUCLEAR SAFETY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, as you know, radioactive heavy water leaked from a reactor at the Pickering nuclear station this past Friday. My understanding is that five to 10 tonnes of radioactive heavy water leaked over roughly a two-hour period. My understanding is the public was not notified of this leak until Monday of this week. Why was the public not notified within 24 hours that the leak occurred?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question, and we did have some discussions on this this morning at the estimates committee, Mr. Speaker. We did bring, of our own volition, Paul Pasquet, who is the chief nuclear officer from OPG, to the committee. He was available to answer questions, and he answered them extremely well. He confirmed that we followed all of the protocol, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission was notified. They have confirmed that all protective protocols were followed to ensure the public safety of the public and the employees.

I have to say, they also, of their own volition, without a requirement to do so, sent notices to all the mayors, to all the public safety organizations that would have anything involved in the issue, Mr. Speaker. It was comprehensive, and they followed all the protocols.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it seems like everyone was informed except the public.

Minister, I think you would agree that a leak of five to 10 tonnes of radioactive water is no small thing, and, quite frankly, I'm surprised that OPG would wait three days to notify the residents of neighbouring communities that a leak of this magnitude had occurred nearby.

Will this government change its protocol for notifying neighbouring communities so that residents don't have to wait three days to learn of a serious leak?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'll just confirm that OPG followed all of the protocols of—the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's protocol RD-99.3 states that OPG will communicate in one business day of unplanned events exceeding regulatory limits or off-site effects. Mr. Speaker, they did; they went beyond what they were required to do, notifying almost immediately all the public safety officials of all the municipalities in the area.

I think the member thinks he has got some little technical twist to try to embarrass OPG. Mr. Speaker, they were outstanding in how they responded. There was no danger to individuals, to the public, in any way, shape or form. It was totally 100% contained, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has confirmed that after the fact.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Yesterday we saw some of our colleagues on the other side of the House head for Sudbury to debate their ideas for the north. It's good to see them visiting that part of our province.

The Premier has made it very clear that our government is committed to building Ontario up, and this means not only investing in urban areas but also our smaller and our northern communities as well.

Minister, there are more than 11,000 kilometres of provincial highways in northern Ontario. That's about 60% of the entire provincial highway network.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell this House how our government has invested in transportation infrastructure in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks to the member for Kitchener Centre for the question. Yes, it was terrific to see the opposition actually going above Barrie and actually visiting northern Ontario, a part of the province they ignored during—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins—James Bay will come to order, and the member from Eglinton—Lawrence. Thank you.

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I would certainly encourage the members of the opposition to visit other parts of the north, places like Kenora, Red Lake, Hearst, Geraldton, Longlac and Thunder Bay, because this would give them a real opportunity to see

first-hand the investments our government has made in roads, highways and bridges across northern Ontario.

Since 2003, our government has approved over 4,000 kilometres of highways—not bad—and 245 bridges. We have constructed hundreds of kilometres of new four-lane highways along with a bunch of new bridges. We have invested more than \$5 billion in northern highways since 2003—an unprecedented—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementarity?
1120

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's very encouraging to know that we do have a very balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario and for improving our transportation network. This will, of course, add to strengthening our economy—it's going to create jobs—and it improves our quality of life for all Ontarians.

We know that this year our government is going to be investing \$2.2 billion to repair and expand our provincial highways and our bridges. For northern Ontario, this includes \$527 million. Can the minister please share with us the recent investments that we have made to build and fix transportation in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you again to the member for Kitchener Centre, because certainly investment in transportation infrastructure is one of our government's top priorities and certainly one of the top priorities for northern Ontario.

Let me just tell you a bit about the past construction season in 2014 in northern Ontario. We upgraded 499 kilometres of highways and 33 bridges. We constructed 58 kilometres of new highway, including two new bridges, and that, of course, included the construction of 13 kilometres of new four-lane highway, Highway 17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, a great project. We are continuing work on the expansion of Highway 69 south of Sudbury, including new interchanges and bridges. It was another remarkably successful year for the northern highways program and, I think, a real commitment—by continuing to invest in the expansion and the improvement of vital transportation, we're helping to support a dynamic business climate in the north and improve the lives of all northerners.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport this morning.

Minister, are you aware that your ministry has signed off on a report that states that locating wind turbines in Prince Edward county, specifically in South Marysburgh in Prince Edward county, would cause negative effects on several local heritage sites?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I appreciate the member's question. I'm not aware of the specific issue. I would love to sit down with the member and get some more information and provide him with the information necessary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: This is part of the problem with this government: They're acting in silos. They don't know what one ministry is doing from one to the other.

Minister, the provincial policy statement from 2014 for your ministry states: "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be preserved." According to your own ministry, that includes the steeple at Mount Tabor Playhouse in Milford in Prince Edward county in South Marysburgh. However, the project that would denigrate these sites was posted onto the EBR, the Environmental Bill of Rights.

Minister, what should I tell my constituents in Prince Edward county, that you will ignore your own policies, you'll trample on the Ontario Heritage Act and you'll bend over backwards to help a wind developer before you'll help the people of Prince Edward county?

Hon. Michael Coteau: What I think you can tell your constituents back home is that you'll book an appointment, sit down with me, have an exchange and a conversation so you can update us on what's going on and work with us in order to find a solution. I would expect that if there's an issue that's taking place, I think as MPPs in this Legislature we need to work together to get to the bottom of it and find solutions. You know my office is accessible, so any time you want to address these issues, please come and see me.

RING OF FIRE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

International mining giant Cliffs Natural Resources has spent \$550 million in the Ring of Fire. It had a plan to create thousands of jobs. It can no longer do business with the Ontario Liberals. The CEO of Cliffs Natural Resources made headlines last month, saying that he had "zero hope" for the Ring of Fire and that the project was "beyond the point of no return." Last week, he went on to say that every investment made here was a "disaster."

Does the minister concur with Cliffs's CEO's assessment that the \$60-billion Ring of Fire project is dead?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I would like to think that the member opposite would agree with me when I say that that could not be more wrong. We are moving forward very, very diligently and actively in terms of the Ring of Fire and are working forward on a plan that we are indeed actually implementing.

May I say this about Cliffs Natural Resources: Yes, indeed, they were one of the major companies involved in the Ring of Fire. They obviously have got some challenges of their own. We saw a decision that they made last week related to another one of their operations in another province.

The fact is, there is significant continued industry interest in the Ring of Fire, let alone the fact that we are

working so closely with the First Nations, Matawa First Nations and other First Nations organizations, to move this project forward. We recognize, and I think everyone in the House does, how important it is that we make sure there are ensured benefits to all the First Nations communities as part of that project.

In my supplementary, I'll look forward to expanding on the plan that we have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, in the seven years your government had to develop the Ring of Fire, it has failed to come up with a plan that will create jobs, build infrastructure and reduce the high price of electricity. Your government has promised a development board that was supposed to include partners in industry and First Nations. But besides four bureaucrats sitting at a table playing euchre by themselves, we see nothing.

Your government's regional framework agreement with First Nations isn't working when Matawa chiefs say the government is excluding them from the development corporation board and is not consulting them on mining permits in the Ring of Fire.

Minister, will it be another seven years or more of us asking questions?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, it certainly needs to be noted off the top of my response that indeed the party opposite put nothing in their platform in terms of supporting the Ring of Fire. We have a \$1-billion commitment in terms of transportation infrastructure.

And in relationship to the other part, about—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing knows better than to put up something that is not supposed to be put up, and I would thank the deputy House leader for providing the material.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: So, while we have made an absolutely firm commitment, \$1 billion towards transportation infrastructure, there has been no support on the other side of the House. May I say, it would certainly be gratifying to get support from all sides of the House related to the federal government matching those dollars. We know how important that is in terms of investor confidence.

As for the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp., that is focused very specifically on bringing all those partners on board. That's what we're doing. That's what we're actively doing. Indeed, as I said before, the work that we are doing with the First Nations is vital. We would seek your support. This is—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I do want to remind this particular minister that when I stand, you sit.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I've been better lately, haven't I?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With no editorial. New question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail, le Honourable Kevin Flynn.

Speaker, workers in my own riding of Etobicoke North, as well as across Ontario, deserve to receive the compensation that they are due, the paycheque that they've earned through their own hard work. Unfortunately, we continue to see certain unfair practices, incidents which occur in workplaces across Ontario where people aren't being treated fairly by employers. Whether it's not receiving vacation pay, scheduled breaks, parental leave, minimum wage or other issues, workers in this province are concerned that they aren't getting everything they are entitled to.

Speaker, my question is this: What is the Ministry of Labour doing to ensure that basic employment standards are upheld and workers in Ontario are getting what they've earned?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for that very important question.

The Employment Standards Act sets out the minimum requirements that deal with the payment of wages. That includes overtime pay, vacation pay, public holiday pay, minimum wage. It also includes pregnancy and parental and personal emergency leave, and it talks about termination and severance.

We proactively inspect workplaces in various province-wide employment standards blitzes. We're all committed to enforcing the ESA at the Ministry of Labour. We continue to do all we can because we want to know, at the end of a hard day's work, that every Ontarian is receiving the paycheque they deserve.

We've got three scheduled province-wide proactive blitzes that are focusing on workers who, sadly, are all too often exploited by their employers. They are interns, vulnerable and temporary foreign workers, and temporary help agencies. What these blitzes do is help educate employees about the rights that they and every other Ontarian have under the Employment Standards Act.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. I and my constituents appreciate your stewardship of these important files, but I do flag for you a particular concern, something that I hear about in Etobicoke North and, I'm sure, my colleagues do as well. Many employees fear that their supervisor will react negatively if they question them on their rights, entitlements and privileges under the act. In many companies, staff turnover is high, workers feel lucky to have a position at all, and they fear that standing up might cost them their job.

In other cases, many employees just don't know their rights under the ESA at all and they just don't report various infractions because they're unaware of their own rights and privileges. As the minister said, there are proactive inspections of various workplaces, but how does the ministry attempt to ensure that all employees know their rights under the Employment Standards Act?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for that fine supplementary, because it does get to the heart of the matter. In addition to our proactive enforcement blitzes, the ministry has got several outreach and education initiatives, and we're on social media. The idea is to increase employees' awareness of employment standards and the rights they have.

I want to be very, very clear on this, and all members can help me when they're talking to people around the province of Ontario: Employees in Ontario need to know that it's against the law for employers to take reprisal actions against employees who are simply exercising their rights under the Employment Standards Act.

Earlier this year, the ministry ran a Know Your Rights campaign. It ran in 90 ethnic newspapers in 27 languages and it ran on television in 22 languages as well. It talked about employment standards, labour relations, and health and safety on the job. Anybody who has got a question on their rights can call the ministry's information centre: 1-800-531-5551.

SERVICES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Time and again, your government announces that children and adults with special needs are a priority, even though story after story I hear from parents and people with special needs suggests otherwise.

In fact, the cuts facing the agencies and the people they serve are appalling: 62% of service agencies have cut hours of staff; 51% cut staff positions; 58% are unable to fill open positions, for example, maternity leave; 7% have shut down programs; and 47% are realizing increasing numbers of clients served in programs, some who need 24-hour care.

Minister, my question today is: How much of the \$810 million you recently announced is going to the front line?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm delighted to have this opportunity to speak again about our tremendous investment in developmental service workers that we are totally committed to.

We know that the type of work that the front line does is invaluable. I have been across this province, meeting many of these front-line workers. Their work is extremely valuable and our government has shown this particular commitment to the valuable services that they provide through our budget, which, as I remember—I think we all remember—the official opposition voted against. And so it is quite clear that our investment will be going to those front-line workers. We have dedicated a large sum for that very purpose and negotiations are currently under way in terms of its distribution.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, last week I met with a number of people from the front lines as well. I can tell you, without reservation whatsoever, that those agencies

supporting our most vulnerable citizens do not believe this money is going to the front line. They don't want to cut staff, programs or hours. You are forcing that decision, sadly.

It seems quite harsh that after 11 years, your party has allowed 23,000 people to languish on wait-lists. That means, in very real and practical terms, that our most vulnerable citizens are not having their needs met under your watch. Again, we want and need your assurance that these cuts will be reversed.

Minister, how much of that \$810 million is actually going to the front-line services?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: As was extremely clear in our budget, our government is investing \$200 million over three years for front-line workers in the lower wage bands. Currently we are working with employers and unions and we're discussing an approach that will ensure a service system for the future. We want, obviously, to promote labour stability as well as ensuring a qualified workforce. We're working with the Ministry of Labour. There are a number of tables established, as I understand it. We will continue to work to ensure that those front-line, extremely valuable workers will get the type of increase in salary that we committed to and which they deserve.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Labour. The ministry is apparently deeply disappointed about community legal clinics advertising for unpaid articling positions due to lack of funding. Articling students have already graduated, but they must article for a year to become fully licensed lawyers. Many have families to support and are carrying huge debt loads. Students who want to gain experience representing disadvantaged and marginalized legal aid clients will not be able to afford to work for free. What is the minister's plan to ensure that articling students are not forced to take unpaid work in order to practise law?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the honourable member for that very important question. It doesn't matter what your job title or your position is, if you perform work for somebody in the province of Ontario, you're covered by the Employment Standards Act and you deserve to be paid.

There is a very narrow exemption that exists for co-op students, trainees and the self-employed. The exemption is also for accredited university and college programs to give their students valuable workplace experience while they pursue their degree. These rules have been on the books for many years, and we've been very active in terms of increasing people's awareness.

The member spoke about my disappointment when I heard this news, and I share that disappointment with her as well. It is legal, currently, for a student-at-law to work, but it's deeply disappointing when any law office, legal aid clinic or otherwise chooses not to pay a student who accepts an articling position, especially when it's a 10-month, full-time job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Access to justice is fundamental to a functioning democracy. It's critical that the justice system includes lawyers who represent the diversity of our province, which is why articling positions have always been paid. The rise in unpaid articling positions creates barriers to people from low-income and often racialized backgrounds to becoming lawyers. What will the minister do about the current Employment Standards Act exemptions that exclude law students and some other professionals from the minimum wage provisions of the act?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you once again to the member for that excellent supplementary. It's an issue I think we all need to turn our attention to. I can tell you what we do in the province of Ontario: All articling students who work in the legal services branch of every government of Ontario ministry are paid as they should be. Certainly, we are setting the example.

Minimum wage laws are very important to employment standards protections. They ensure that individuals are not exploited and that they're paid for the work they indeed do. As I said, here in the province of Ontario, at the ministries, we pay each and every one of the articling students the money they're entitled to.

In this case, what we have before us, and what I'm turning my attention to, is that currently there is a regulatory exemption that predates our government. The ministry will be reaching out to colleagues in the legal field through the other ministries to ensure that we begin a discussion on this regulatory exemption as it exists today.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. A number of my constituents are becoming more and more concerned about nuisance animal interactions, which seem to increase as the months get colder. In fact, I have seen coyotes and, while they are a magnificent and beautiful animal, they're not exactly what we feel comfortable seeing in our cities and suburbs. We have heard about stories like Anita Greenaway from Barrie, whose dog was attacked by a coyote in October in the Ardagh Road area.

With recent stories about pet owners seeing more coyotes in Mississauga, Burlington, Brampton, and, perhaps, less so now in Kingston and the Islands, constituents wonder what they can do to ensure that they and their pets stay safe. No doubt there are implications with respect to our changing climate, which is why these animals are being brought closer to our communities.

Minister of Natural Resources, can you please tell us how constituents can help resolve this problem—what they can do to reduce the likelihood that they have a negative interaction with a coyote?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for the question. We in our

ministry have seen this issue coming. I think that anyone with an interest in this would have been following the media reports that have been coming forward on a very regular basis over the last several months, and I would say you could go back even longer.

For the member and her constituents and others who are being affected by this issue, there are some very basic things you can do to keep your family safe: things like making sure that your pets are secure, making sure that your garbage is secure, and making sure that your barbecue is being cleaned on a regular basis.

I would say that as a northern Ontario member, this is an issue we have been dealing with in a broader way for a great deal of time. I make reference, of course, to nuisance bears, which have become a very serious issue for people in northern Ontario over time. Similar issues that affect the bears wandering into organized municipalities are also now affecting communities in southern Ontario. In the supplementary, I'll have a little bit more detail that I'd like to share with the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry for his response and advice on how to reduce the likelihood of running into a coyote. However, many municipalities are wondering what action they can take to reduce the interaction between coyotes and their residents. In fact, just last week, Burlington, Mississauga and Brampton invited Coyote Watch Canada to give them advice on how to reduce these interactions, following the tragic death of a local dog.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could you please explain to this House what municipalities can do to reduce the chance of human-coyote interactions?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again I'll thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for her question.

I would note to the House that in July 2013 our government changed the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to allow municipalities to pay hunters or trappers for the removal of coyotes without MNRF permission. I've had a number of members of our own caucus talk to me about this. It's information that I want to make sure people are aware of.

Municipalities have the ability to pass bylaws that ensure homeowners properly secure their garbage and other wildlife attractants. They have an ability to pass bylaws preventing the feeding of nuisance animals. This is completely within the control and purview of municipalities in the province of Ontario. I would ask them to ensure they're doing everything to protect people, protect their pets and protect their property.

As I've said, we've had great experience on this issue in northern Ontario for quite some time. There is municipalities' control and purview and ability to manage this particular situation, and I'd ask them to do so.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Associate Minister of Finance on a point of order.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. I was delighted this morning to see a very good friend whom I met in my first year of university, at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. She's a teacher here with her class: Ms. Kerrine Gayle David.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to introduce Dr. Ron Common, president of Sault College, and Peter Berlingieri, the chair of Sault College, who are in the members' gallery. They're joining us for college lobby day today.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for allocation of time on Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats. All members take your seats, please.

On November 24, Ms. Matthews moved government notice of motion number 9, a motion to allocation of time on Bill 21.

Mr. Clark then moved that the motion be amended by added the following after the second paragraph:

"That the committee be authorized to hold public hearings in the following locations: Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor and Sudbury;" and

That the fourth bullet point in the third paragraph be amended by deleting the word "second" and substitute "eighth"; and

That the fourth paragraph be amended by deleting "Wednesday, December 3, 2014" and substituting "the first weekday following the completion of public hearings"; and

That the fifth paragraph be amended by deleting "Thursday, December 4, 2014" and substituting "the second weekday following the completion of public hearings"; and

That the sixth paragraph be amended by deleting "Thursday, December 4, 2014" and substituting "that day"; and

That the seventh paragraph be amended by deleting "no later than Monday, December 8, 2014" and substituting "the first sessional day following completion of clause-by-clause."

All those in favour of the amendment, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Arnott, Ted
 Bailey, Robert
 Bisson, Gilles
 Clark, Steve
 Dunlop, Garfield
 Fife, Catherine
 Forster, Cindy
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne
 Gélinas, France
 Gretzky, Lisa
 Harris, Michael
 Hatfield, Percy
 Hillier, Randy
 Horwath, Andrea
 Jones, Sylvia
 MacLeod, Lisa
 Mantha, Michael
 Martow, Gila
 McDonell, Jim
 McNaughton, Monte
 Munro, Julia
 Natyshak, Taras
 Nicholls, Rick
 Pettapiece, Randy

Sattler, Peggy
 Scott, Laurie
 Singh, Jagmeet
 Smith, Todd
 Tabuns, Peter
 Taylor, Monique
 Thompson, Lisa M.
 Vanthof, John
 Walker, Bill
 Yakabuski, John
 Yurek, Jeff

Dong, Han
 Duguid, Brad
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel

McMahon, Eleanor
 McMeekin, Ted
 Meilleur, Madeleine

Wong, Soo
 Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Arnott, Ted
 Bailey, Robert
 Bisson, Gilles
 Clark, Steve
 Dunlop, Garfield
 Fife, Catherine
 Forster, Cindy
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne
 Gélinas, France
 Gretzky, Lisa
 Harris, Michael

Hatfield, Percy
 Hillier, Randy
 Horwath, Andrea
 Jones, Sylvia
 MacLeod, Lisa
 Mantha, Michael
 Martow, Gila
 McDonell, Jim
 McNaughton, Monte
 Munro, Julia
 Natyshak, Taras
 Nicholls, Rick
 Pettapiece, Randy

Sattler, Peggy
 Scott, Laurie
 Singh, Jagmeet
 Smith, Todd
 Tabuns, Peter
 Taylor, Monique
 Thompson, Lisa M.
 Vanthof, John
 Walker, Bill
 Yakabuski, John
 Yurek, Jeff

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the amendment will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
 Anderson, Granville
 Baker, Yvan
 Ballard, Chris
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bradley, James J.
 Chiarelli, Bob
 Colle, Mike
 Coteau, Michael
 Crack, Grant
 Damerla, Dipika
 Del Duca, Steven
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic
 Dong, Han
 Duguid, Brad
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fraser, John
 Gravelle, Michael
 Hoggarth, Ann
 Hoskins, Eric
 Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Kwinter, Monte
 Lalonde, Marie-France
 MacCharles, Tracy
 Malhi, Harinder
 Matthews, Deborah
 Mauro, Bill
 McGarry, Kathryn
 McMahon, Eleanor
 McMeekin, Ted
 Meilleur, Madeleine

Milczyn, Peter Z.
 Moridi, Reza
 Murray, Glen R.
 Naidoo-Harris, Indira
 Naqvi, Yasir
 Oraziotti, David
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadi, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sandals, Liz
 Sergio, Mario
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Vernile, Daiane
 Wong, Soo
 Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 50; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. Therefore, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1158 to 1500.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 37; the nays are 50.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment lost.

Is the House ready for the vote on the main motion?

Ms. Matthews has moved government notice of motion number 9. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
 Anderson, Granville
 Baker, Yvan
 Ballard, Chris
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bradley, James J.
 Chiarelli, Bob
 Colle, Mike
 Coteau, Michael
 Crack, Grant
 Damerla, Dipika
 Del Duca, Steven
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic

Fraser, John
 Gravelle, Michael
 Hoggarth, Ann
 Hoskins, Eric
 Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Kwinter, Monte
 Lalonde, Marie-France
 MacCharles, Tracy
 Malhi, Harinder
 Matthews, Deborah
 Mauro, Bill
 McGarry, Kathryn

Milczyn, Peter Z.
 Moridi, Reza
 Murray, Glen R.
 Naidoo-Harris, Indira
 Naqvi, Yasir
 Oraziotti, David
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadi, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sandals, Liz
 Sergio, Mario
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Vernile, Daiane

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Ms. Laurie Scott: To raise awareness and trigger action to end all acts of violence against women and girls, the UN observes International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25. In 1995, at the fourth World Conference on Women, UN member states took up the global call to end all forms of violence against women and girls. They recognized that violence is one of the main mechanisms denying women equality, and that it imposes high social, health and economic costs. Since then, an historic two thirds of countries have put laws on the books to stop violence against women, yet gaps in laws, implementation of legal protection and essential services remain.

The statistics are alarming: According to the YWCA Canada, there are 460,000 sexual assaults in Canada every year. Only 33 out of every 1,000 sexual assault cases are reported to the police, and 29 are recorded as a crime. These numbers speak volumes about how many assailants walk free, and why women may be afraid to press charges against their abusers.

Ending violence against women should be one of our key priorities here in Ontario. Tomorrow, our opposition day motion will be debated, calling on the Ontario Legislature to establish a select committee to investigate sexual harassment in the workplace. Our culture is at a

turning point. By acting now, supporting my reasonable request, we can continue this important dialogue, hear from victims and experts, bring forward a plan to address it and build a safer and more equitable workplace environment for current and future generations. I'm hoping for unanimous consent tomorrow.

RON COLASANTI

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise today to honour a local figure from my area, Ron Colasanti, who passed away Thursday, November 7, at the Tidewell Hospice in Lakewood, Florida. Ron was 79 years old.

He was a unique man who would help anybody in need, and he had a heart for politics and bettering his community. He was the former Gosfield South councillor from 1967 to 1973 and was elected to Kingsville council in 2010 at age 75. However, he did not run for re-election in October.

Ron was a charismatic figure, someone that I thoroughly enjoyed talking with, and even though we were on completely opposite sides of the political spectrum, perhaps that's what made our connection all the more special. He was easy to talk to, he was plain-spoken, and I think he was very well respected in his career as a municipal politician and certainly within his community. He made incredible contributions to the local greenhouse industry, as well as his family—they are literally world-renowned. He also added a virtue and a charisma to deliberations at the municipal level that I think will be unmatched right to this day.

I simply want to offer my condolences to his family and to his colleagues, and to wish him Godspeed. He was really a remarkable figure, one that I certainly will miss and one that contributed greatly to the community of Windsor and Essex counties.

CAMPBELLVILLE TREE LIGHTING

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I rise today to speak about a lovely event I had the pleasure of taking part in this past weekend. Last Saturday night, I travelled to Campbellville's Gazebo Park to participate in their community tree lighting ceremony. I was there with the honorary mayor, Tony Cristello, and Liz Lambrick, along with a cheerful crowd of 40 kids, parents, grandkids, neighbours and friends. They were all there.

It was a wet, windy day, but try as it might, the weather didn't dampen anyone's spirit. After enjoying some great music, hot chocolate and the odd Timbit, the moment we were all waiting for arrived.

After I led the crowd in a final countdown, Mayor Cristello flipped the switch and the giant tree sprang to life in brilliant colour. There were oohs and ahs, clapping and even singing. Once the tree was lit, it was wonderful—a very special evening with friends and families under the stars.

While the lights, food and music all made for a good time, it was really the people, Mr. Speaker, who had gathered together that made the evening special.

I want you to know that it is evenings like this that bring people together that really make a community feel as one. I'm delighted that communities like Campbellville maintain such traditions, and I commend those who weathered the rain to help make the start of the holiday season so special.

HURON MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: On November 13, the Huron Manufacturing Association handed out its awards for excellence at Hensall and District Community Centre. This awards ceremony is where businesses in my riding are recognized for their achievements in innovation and socially responsible business practices.

Worthy of noting is Blyth Farm Cheese, which received Manufacturer of the Year award. I might add that we have been very fortunate that this particular cheese has been served time and time again right here at Queen's Park; and it also was one of the top winners at the recent Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Additional awards went to Brett and Brian Landsborough from Maelstrom Winery, and Joost van Dorp from Blyth Farm Cheese, who received Junior Manufacturer of the Year awards.

Ron and Ruth Schefter were recipients of the Chairman's Award, and Iceculture of Hensall was the recipient of the Innovative Product Award. That innovative product might come to mind when I talk about the World Junior Hockey Championships last year. The Canadian Tire advertisement had an ice truck—a truck made solely out of ice. That was done in Hensall, Ontario.

Lastly, Hensall District Co-op was the recipient of the Employer of the Year. I totally support this co-operative spirit, and they are indeed a great employer.

These awards are important and a reminder of how rich our communities are with entrepreneurship and innovation. The Huron Manufacturing Awards ceremony is just one example that small business is big business in Huron-Bruce.

WINDSOR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I rise today to congratulate the Windsor International Film Festival on celebrating its 10th anniversary this month. Since its inception, the festival has brought cultural appreciation, tourism and, of course, entertainment to my community of Windsor West.

This November demonstrated the growing success of the event, boasting over 100 titles shown at over 186 viewings throughout the nine-day festival. With a record-breaking attendance of over 15,000 patrons, this event is proving to be foundational to the growth of the film industry in Windsor and the development of local talent across our creative sector.

This festival, and the ongoing films presented by the Windsor International Film Festival, would not be possible without the professionalism and enthusiasm of all Windsor International Film Festival staff, board members and the many dedicated volunteers.

I would like to extend a special thanks to the festival's executive director, Vincent Georgie, manufacturing director Nick Cacciato and technical director Sung Min Bae. As well, I would like to thank the festival's community partners and local businesses for providing the vibrant atmosphere that people have come to expect.

With the credits just beginning to roll on the 2014 festival, there is already anticipation for the next in the series, and I encourage all members in this chamber to join me, my colleague Taras Natyshak and my colleague Percy Hatfield at the movies in 2015.

OTTAWA RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On Friday, November 14, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre's 40th-anniversary fundraiser at Centrepointe Theatres. The centre was celebrating 40 years of support, engagement and growth. It was a delightful evening with a silent auction component and a feature performance by the impressive comedian Jessica Holmes. The fundraiser succeeded in raising awareness in the community as well as over \$9,500 in funds.

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The centre was founded in 1974 by a small group of women who were committed to offering services to a community in need. The main focus of the centre is to provide counselling to women, to raise awareness in the community, and to educate and empower those seeking to end sexual violence. The ORCC has helped countless victims but also offers support to families, friends and partners of women who have been sexually assaulted.

Le centre ORCC est un acteur important dans la lutte contre la violence sexuelle et dans le développement de collectivités plus sécuritaires pour tous les citoyens et toutes les citoyennes. Le personnel et les bénévoles du centre offrent des initiatives pour venir en aide aux femmes en détresse qui ont besoin de conseils et d'appui.

The 24-hour crisis line can be reached at 613-562-2333.

DILLON CARMAN

Mr. Todd Smith: Canada's heavyweight boxing champion hails from Prince Edward-Hastings. On Saturday, October 25, Dillon Carman, known in boxing circles as Big Country, became this country's biggest boxing champ.

The former Maple Leaf Gardens, now known as the Mattamy Centre, was the setting for a brawl that made a Rocky Balboa-Apollo Creed fight look like a knitting bee. The 28-year-old from Madoc finished off Eric "the Hammer" Martel of Quebec City with what Toronto Sun writer Steve Buffery called "a lethal left-right combina-

tion" with just seconds to go to earn the knockout and the Canadian Heavyweight Championship.

He's 6 foot 6, 240 pounds, from the former Belleville Boxing Club. He returned Saturday night to the Madoc Kiwanis Centre to a hero's welcome. He's proud of where he comes from and he gets the support of a lot of people back at home, sponsors included.

We heard some mischievous tales on Saturday night from his mom and his grandmother, who were there as well, about his days walking the halls of Madoc Public and Centre Hastings Secondary schools.

He played a lot of street hockey. He played ice hockey at the Madoc arena and spent some time fishing on Moira Lake. But ultimately it was his love of and commitment to boxing that helped him reach these amazing heights.

So, Big Country, you've got a big heart. The Commonwealth championship is going to be next.

He's a great role model, and it just proves that if you put your heart and soul into something, you can accomplish your dreams. Big Country Carman, heavyweight champion of our big, beautiful country here in Canada, congratulations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think he also likes to knit. I'm not sure.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I rise today in the House to acknowledge Woman Abuse Prevention Month, and today is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Two weeks ago, I toured Halton Women's Place, the local women's shelter in my riding of Burlington. It was a timely visit, as a young Burlington woman had just tragically lost her life to domestic violence.

During my visit, I was deeply touched by the work Halton Women's Place is doing to restore the lives of women and children in our community. This is an organization providing shelter and crisis services for physically, emotionally, financially and sexually abused women and their dependent children. This is an organization fuelled and inspired by the courageous women who want to make a change in their lives. This is an organization dedicated to ending violence against women and children once and for all.

To raise awareness about Woman Abuse Prevention Month, Halton Women's Place has turned our community purple with a campaign called Shine the Light. Businesses and offices in our city have decorated in purple, and individuals are wearing purple. Wrapped in Courage scarves like many of us are wearing here today, because purple is the colour of freedom.

As part of the campaign, the Halton Women's Place has also received proclamations of zero tolerance for woman abuse, including one from me during my visit, and raised the Halton Women's Place flag in every municipality in Halton region. This flag symbolizes a call to action to end violence against women.

This year, Halton Women's Place has provided services to 840 women and over 1,000 children through its residential and community outreach programs. In addition, it responded to more than 1,800 crisis calls.

Through education and prevention, both in the shelters and in the community, Halton Women's Place has made, and will continue to make, a huge difference in the lives of some of Halton's most vulnerable residents, and I am proud to stand in this place and salute them.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Granville Anderson: I rise in the House today to tell you about a very interesting meeting I had recently in my constituency office.

Last Friday, I had the great pleasure of meeting 15-year-old Jessica and her mother. Jessica and her younger brother were adopted when Jessica was three years old, and while it's very clear that the siblings have found their forever family, Jessica continues to advocate for others who are still looking for theirs.

November is Adoption Awareness Month, which is what prompted Jessica and her mom to make an appointment at my constituency office in Durham. Jessica and her mom, Carol, shared their story with me. They told me about how they became a family and some of the challenges they faced.

The daughter and mother also shared with me the advocacy work that they have done to help others find their forever family. They talked about Jessica's first time presenting to a government body at the House of Commons when she was 11 years old.

We talk a great deal about the importance of giving every child the very best start in life. The story Jessica told me was one where the start may not have been the very best, but in which a new beginning with a loving family has helped her to make up for it.

In honour of Jessica and her forever family, I remind you today that this is Adoption Awareness Month. I was reminded by Jessica of the importance of every child having a family to grow up and grow old in, to allow them to thrive to their fullest ability, as it is clear Jessica is doing now.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 25, 2014, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption. Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la politique sociale et je propose son adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 5, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

Reports by committees? Last call for reports by committees.

Introduction of bills? Last call for introduction of bills. Motions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll back up. We have a bill?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, we have a bill and a sore leg. The two of them together make me really slow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll accept that and revert back to motions after.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker, for your indulgence.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTHY DECISIONS FOR HEALTHY EATING ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 FAVORISANT DES CHOIX SAINS POUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINE

M^{me} Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to require certain food service premises to display nutritional information / Projet de loi 47, Loi assujettissant certains lieux de restauration à l'obligation d'afficher des renseignements nutritionnels.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

M^{me} France G  linas: This is the lucky sixth time for this bill. It's my menu-labelling bill, called Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating. Basically, what it does is that it mandates the owners and operators of regulated food service premises to display the number of calories in a standard font next to each food item on the menu for every item that is sold at the premises as well as other information such as a checkmark for food items that have very high levels of sodium, that being defined as 1,500 milligrams, which is the maximum allowed per day. Regulated food service premises are food service premises that sell meals for immediate consumption and that belong to a chain of 20 or more Ontario locations that are brought under this act. There are also inspection powers and penalties provided. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is given regulation-making power, including powers to provide for exemption.

Hopefully, my sixth time will be my lucky time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Did I hear the member say she had two bills, or one got stuck—

M^{me} France G  linas: Just one.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just one.

I'll go back to motions. Motions?

Statements by the ministries?

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HEALTHY LIVING SAINES HABITUDES DE VIE

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to new legislation that I introduced yesterday: the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014. The first piece of the proposed legislation that I want to highlight today is the requirement for large chain restaurants and other food service premises with 20 or more locations to include calories on their menus. This legislation will not apply to small restaurants with just a handful of locations. We want to give families the information they need to make the healthy choice the easy choice every time they eat outside the home.

Earlier this month, our government announced regulation changes that will see Ontario take the next logical and important step in protecting children from smoking. We are doing this by eliminating smoking on playgrounds, sports fields and bar and restaurant patios, and also by banning the sale of tobacco on university and college campuses. Now we need to move the yardstick even closer to our goal of having the lowest smoking rate in Canada and provide greater protections for Ontario families.

Let me begin with e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are a relatively new product, and in the short time they have been around, they're already emerging as a public health issue. According to researchers and smoke-free Ontario partners, young people find e-cigarettes appealing. We will be funding research projects to learn more about e-cigarettes to inform future decisions.

Under the proposed legislation, we would:

- ban the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone under 19;

- require retailers to request ID from anyone who appears to be under 25 and wishes to purchase e-cigarettes and to post signs explaining age-based sales restrictions;

- ban the display and promotion of e-cigarettes in places where e-cigarettes and tobacco products are sold;

- prohibit the owner or operator of a place of entertainment from employing or authorizing anyone to promote e-cigarettes or the sale of e-cigarettes at the place of entertainment;

- ban the sale of e-cigarettes in certain places, such as vending machines and health care facilities;

- prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in certain places, such as enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places;

- require employers and proprietors of places where the use of e-cigarettes is prohibited to ensure compliance with the prohibition;

- protect home health care workers from the potential harmful effects of e-cigarette vapour;

- protect employees who try to enforce the proposed legislation from retaliation by employers; and

- provide for an enforcement regime.

This legislation would provide the Lieutenant Governor in Council with the regulation-making authority to:

- specify the wording and placement of any signs that must be posted under the legislation;

- prescribe additional places where e-cigarettes cannot be used or sold; and

- address emerging issues as evidence becomes available.

I'm confident that our proposed changes will be supported by public health and tobacco control stakeholders.

Another part of the legislation is proposed amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. These amendments would ban the sale of flavoured tobacco products and would allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make a regulation temporarily exempting menthol-flavoured tobacco products from the sales ban for a period of up to two years.

Our government has publicly committed to prohibiting the sale of tobacco products that contain flavours and additives that appeal to youth. Flavoured tobacco products are one of the few remaining ways that tobacco companies have of marketing to our kids. Research shows that flavoured tobacco products can make youth into regular smokers. With many flavours to choose from, from strawberry to watermelon to bubble gum, flavoured tobacco has become a gateway to addiction.

Additional evidence has recently emerged that indicates that youth are using menthol-flavoured products in high numbers. This new research is why our government is proposing to include menthol in our ban on the sale of flavoured tobacco. We have a responsibility to act on flavoured tobacco, and we are going to do that by banning the sale of flavours, be they bubble gum or mint.

We are working to prevent the next generation of Ontarians from becoming addicted to tobacco. With these measures, Ontario can demonstrate leadership in tobacco control by reducing the potential harm of e-cigarettes and by eliminating the sale of flavoured tobacco to youth.

I want to assure the members that we would work closely with our stakeholders to implement these proposals. This legislation also proposes to strengthen the Smoke-Free Ontario Act by increasing the maximum fines for youth-related sales offences such as selling tobacco to minors.

I urge all members to support our proposed legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of the PC caucus with respect to the Making Healthier Choices Act. I have only just reviewed the bill, and at this time I have more questions than comments.

I understand that the bill includes the following agenda:

- ban the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 19;

- prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in certain places where the smoking of tobacco is prohibited;

- ban the sale of e-cigarettes in certain places where the sale of tobacco is prohibited;

- prohibit the display and promotion of e-cigarettes in places where e-cigarettes or tobacco products are sold or offered for sale;

- ban the sale of flavoured tobacco products, with a delayed implementation date for menthol-flavoured tobacco products;

- increase maximum fines for those who sell tobacco to youth, making Ontario's maximum fines the highest in Canada; and

- strengthen enforcement to allow for testing of substances used in water pipes—for example, hookahs and shisha—in indoor public places.

We support minors being restricted from purchasing tobacco and tobacco-related products. A number of health organizations, from the Lung Association to the Heart and Stroke Foundation to the cancer society and the Toronto Board of Health, have been very vocal and active in educating all of us about the health dangers of tobacco and tobacco-like products.

Marketing of any kind of tobacco or tobacco-related products to youth is shown to encourage youth to start this unhealthy habit, and we agree that we need to stop that here in Ontario by regulating e-cigarettes. But is an outright ban on menthol cigarettes good public policy? I think that we will hear a lot of debate, during this debate

on the bill, that banning menthol will only drive more smokers to cheap, illegal cigarettes, and that concerns me. For this reason, I would also like to see the government take more concrete steps to stop the selling of tobacco products to minors through illegal smoke shacks, especially as it is expected that some of these new measures will send users into the illegal market.

Also included in the new bill are measures to:

- make caloric information mandatory in eating establishments, including grocery stores, that provide eat-in and takeout food options;

- require calories for standard food and beverage items, including alcohol, to be posted on menus and menu boards in restaurants, convenience stores, grocery stores and other food service premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario;

- require food service operators to post contextual information that would help to educate patrons about their daily caloric requirements; and

- authorize public health inspectors to enforce menu-labelling requirements.

The Ontario PCs support the idea of helping consumers make informed choices for themselves and their families, especially since at least one third of our calories are consumed when we are away from home. As such, I want to say that this move seems like a good step forward, which was originally introduced and championed by the good member from Nickel Belt.

Obesity is indeed a serious problem facing children, some as young as five, so we support taking the necessary action in reducing that harm, but we'd like to know a lot more about how much flexibility the government will provide in how establishments meet this provision. I think the most important message today is that childhood obesity is on the rise, and we need to make it our public health priority, but measures such as banning junk food and labelling menus with calorie counts are only one part of it.

1530

I'd like to see a more wholesome strategy, namely, ramping up the daily physical activity for school-aged children. Physical education is where we need to be doing more. As a former recreation director, I'm fully supportive of physical activity for all ages and taking a proactive approach to health care wherever possible. The World Health Organization has warned us that the number of overweight children under five years of age is estimated to be over 42 million, and almost all of them are in developed countries like Canada.

Again, the proposals are a good step in the right direction. However, we do want to see the details and hear from the stakeholders before providing a more thorough comment. For example, to our knowledge, some restaurants are already doing their own forms of menu labelling. In fact, as many as 60% of them have voluntarily brought in these types of measures.

We look forward to getting more details on this bill from the ministry, namely, what flexibility will be given to multi-serving dishes—for example, is pizza to be

labelled by the slice or by the whole pizza—and how much time they're giving establishments to comply with the new rule.

Another question we have is, are vending machine operators who own 20 or more machines also required to disclose calorie information? It is not clear if they're included under this bill.

We look forward to the briefing with the ministry in the near future and hearing from health care providers, restaurant owners and the public on what can be done to improve health care in the future.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure for me to rise in the House and talk about the new bill. The first two parts of the bill are elements that I have been pushing for, for a long time.

The first part deals with menu labelling. Menu labelling is quite simple. When you go to McDonald's, right there on the menu board, you will see: Big Mac, 450 calories, \$4.99. It's as easy as that. At the point of purchase, when you are about to decide what you're about to eat, you will see the amount of calories that you want to eat. This is what we call menu labelling.

This is an idea that I have pushed since 2009. I introduced a bill very similar to this one today. This is my sixth time, so I feel pretty lucky. If you don't give up around here, Speaker, sometimes you get something done. I have a feeling this is about to come.

But in those six years, the body of evidence on this issue has really grown. We now know that consumers make healthier choices, in the sense that by order, you can see 390 less calories per order. The orders usually cost a little bit more, because more and more fast-food outlets are providing healthy choices, and the people are making healthy choices, and that shows in the number of calories that they choose to buy. That also shows it's good for the bottom line, because those restaurants tend to sell a little bit more of their healthy alternatives.

But what we have also discovered is that we need to flag high sodium. We need to flag the foods that have an incredible amount of salt. Some of them, by looking at them, look healthy, and then you realize that they have something like 7,000 milligrams of sodium. On a daily basis, we should not consume more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium, but then this one dish will have 7,000 milligrams, and it is impossible to tell.

I'll do a little quiz with you, Speaker. Let's say I offer you an Italian sub on nine-grain whole wheat bread, or a Grandpa Burger with cheese. Usually, people would say the Grandpa Burger with cheese would probably have more salt than the six-inch Italian sub on nine-grain whole wheat bread. Well, you would be wrong. The Grandpa Burger has 1,100 milligrams of sodium, and the sub has 1,930 milligrams. It is impossible to guess, unless we give you that information.

All we are asking is that not only do you put the calories, but you put a check mark for the high sodium. Then go to the brochures that they all have, where you have in very fine print all of the nutritional information. That's part 1—way overdue.

Part 2 is something that you will also be interested in, Speaker, because in 2008, you and I put together a bill that became law that banned flavoured cigarillos. Unfortunately, the tobacco industry had not even seen the ink dry on that bill before they had already found loopholes, and the loopholes were in the way that we described.

I'm happy to see now that we will be banning flavour. But I have started to read the bill, and nowhere in the bill does it actually include menthol. Much to the opposite, it includes a restriction clause, which means that we could exclude any of the flavours.

For anybody who follows this issue, we all know what happened in Alberta. In Alberta, they had basically passed a bill to ban all flavoured tobacco products, whether it be smokes, smokeless, the chew, the hookah pipe; it didn't matter. If it was flavoured, it was banned—similar to what we'll do here—and they had that little clause for exception. Well, the tobacco industry was really good at lobbying, like they always are, and they got menthol excluded.

The government says that menthol is included, but it is not written in the bill. What is written in the bill is the possibility for exemption. So there are a few things that we certainly will be cautious about.

The third piece is the e-cigarette. The e-cigarette is not regulated at all in Ontario. We see the amount of young people using e-cigarettes. The price, the marketing, the distribution system: All of it targets youth. It's a good step forward.

J'aurais aimé rajouter quelques mots en français, mais je manque de temps. C'est un projet de loi qui ressemble beaucoup à mes projets de loi, puis qui a besoin de petites différences.

Merci.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Todd Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

“Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and....

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false 'fails', which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I agree with this and will send it to the table with Tyler.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from Kent MacNeill, a constituent of mine in Val Caron. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government has made" PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas, since October 2009, insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask Ethan—a good page—to bring it to the Clerk.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly, signed by a great number of people from Oxford and, I believe, even from the great riding of Brant. I want to present it on their behalf.

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990...; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

I will affix my signature, as I agree with the petition, and I'll send it up with Moiz to the table.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with this petition. I'll affix my name and give it to page Mikaila to bring up to the desk.

1540

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the

Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I agree with this, will sign it and send it to the table with Elijah.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I have 762 signatures for the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the Education Act of Ontario currently allows the private schools to provide program for children younger than four years old;

"Whereas the best interest of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents, as declared by the United Nations resolution under the rights of the child;

"Whereas parents select Montessori education for their children to fulfill their child's individual developmental needs and characteristics;

"Whereas Montessori primary programs accept children from the age of two-and-a-half years to fulfill the three-age mix—from two-and-a-half years of age up to six years of age—working together in one class; such child-to-child teaching has been found repeatedly to produce often dramatically better outcomes than teacher-led instruction;

"Whereas Association Montessori Internationale is a leading international authority in all aspects of Montessori pedagogy and philosophy, including teacher training and school recognition;

"Whereas Bill 10 currently before the Ontario Parliament will exclude children younger than four years of age from attending private schools which would violate one of the basic principles of the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy for mixed-age groups; and take away parents' rights to a choice of education for their child;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the members of the Legislative Assembly amend the definition of private school in the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014 (Bill 10) to allow children who are two-and-a-half years old or older to be enrolled in private Montessori schools under the guideline and supervision of the Association Montessori Internationale."

I will provide this petition to page Kelsey.

ASTHMA

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

I agree with this petition. I affix my name and hope Ryan's Law passes through this Legislature.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect, and substandard care for patients at our hospitals and long-term-care homes;

"Whereas there are more and more cases of hospital acquired infections;

"Whereas people with complaints have no independent body to listen to their concerns;

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of hospitals and other front line care organizations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman's mandate to include Ontario's hospitals, long-term-care homes and other front line care organizations."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Tyler to bring it to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the

Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete...; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I'll send this down with page Nick.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition is a support to my colleague's private member's bill yesterday. I know my friend from across the way, from Thunder Bay—Superior North, will love to hear this:

"Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads 'that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles'—"

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Mantha: And I forgot my friend, Mr. Crack—"off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles";

"Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03," by my colleague Mr. Crack—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: From Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Michael Mantha: From Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

"Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately."

I wholeheartedly support this petition and present it to page Ethan to bring it down to the table and the Clerks.

FISHING REGULATIONS

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary is printed each year by the Ministry of Natural Resources and distributed to recreational fishermen throughout the province to inform them of all the relevant seasons, limits, licence requirements and other regulations; and

"Whereas this valuable document is readily available for anglers to keep in their residence, cottage, truck, boat, trailer or on their person to be fully informed of the current fishing regulations; and

"Whereas the MNR has ... abruptly ... reduced the distribution of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary such that even major licence issuers and large fishing retailers are limited to one case of regulations per outlet; and

"Whereas anglers do not always have access to the Internet to view online regulations while travelling or in remote areas;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the production of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary to previous years' quantities such that all anglers have access to a copy and to distribute them accordingly."

I'll sign this and send it to the table with page Joshua.

1550

PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'ai une pétition qui vient du nord-est de l'Ontario :

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l'Ontario continuent d'être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l'essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d'essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l'essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d'écarts de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d'essence annualisés inférieurs. »

Ils demandent « à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« D'accorder à la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l'essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je vais demander à Johann to bring it to the Clerk.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the burden of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition, and I present it—again—to page Ethan to bring down to the Clerks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 20, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

On November 5, 2014, Mr. Hoskins moved second reading of Bill 21. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I would say that the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I just received a note to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on second reading of Bill 21 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, November 26, 2014.”

Second reading vote deferred.

SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

Mr. Naqvi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / *Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the minister for second reading of the bill.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I really appreciate your recognition in giving me the opportunity to speak on a very important bill, Bill 35.

A few weeks ago, our government demonstrated its commitment to protecting our critical infrastructure, like electricity generating stations, nuclear facilities and courthouses, in a way that also ensures our civil liberties are safeguarded. That is why it is truly a pleasure to rise in this House for the second reading of the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014.

The act, if passed, will repeal and replace the Public Works Protection Act, in short known as PWWA, ensuring that we strike the right balance between protecting Ontario's courthouses, electricity generating plants and nuclear facilities and respecting the civil rights of the people of this province.

The current legislation was passed 75 years ago at the start of the Second World War to protect the province's power plants, dams, bridges and other critical public infrastructure from sabotage. It was passed and enacted in three days with bipartisan support in this Legislature. Media reports from the time show the concern that motivated it, and while this legislation was seen as necessary all those decades ago, our government agrees with those concerned that the PWWA is too broad, too vague and outdated.

In December 2010, the Ombudsman produced a report that raised important questions about how the PWWA works and how it was used at the time of the G20 summit in Toronto early that year. In response to these concerns, the government asked the Honourable R. Roy McMurtry, a former Ontario chief justice, to review the legislation. In his report, Mr. McMurtry recommended its repeal and replacement. We have listened to Mr. Marin, the Ombudsman, we have listened to Mr. McMurtry, and we have listened to our civil liberty and policing partners. Now is the time to act and pass this very important bill.

The proposed legislation is more modern and focused on necessary security at courthouses, nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities. It also includes a more transparent process on how we can protect key infrastructure in the province. It achieves the necessary and delicate balance between protecting our communities and protecting our civil rights, and has led to a broad consensus amongst all our partners.

As many in this Legislature already know, this is not the first time our government has introduced this important legislation. In developing this bill, the government conducted extensive consultations to determine what measures would be needed to ensure security should the PWPA be repealed. We sought input and advice from nuclear operators and regulators, electricity producers, justice partners and, of course, municipalities. We also consulted with civil liberties advocates to be sure that the appropriate balance was struck between security and civil liberties.

Over 19 hours of debate have already taken place on this bill in the Legislature during nine days of debate in the previous Parliament. Speaker, 15 members of this House from all three parties have already had an opportunity to speak on this proposed legislation when this bill came forward in this House. Sixteen amendments were put forward by the opposition and have been incorporated in this proposed legislation. All of that process took place in the previous Parliament before the election.

The Ontario Bar Association, the Canadian Sikh Association, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and Ontario Power Generation are just some of the 15 organizations who provided important feedback during public hearings and the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's review of the bill, especially with respect to religious accommodations at courthouses. All the debate, amendments and feedback are reflected in this bill.

The result of this process also shows that out of productive conversation and constructive dialogue comes real action to protect Ontarians.

1600

The proposed legislation is about doing three things: (1) repealing the Public Works Protection Act, (2) setting out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security, and (3) setting out stand-alone legislation respecting the security at prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities in our province.

With respect to court security, the proposed legislation is aligned with the current powers granted to court security guards under the PWPA. The legislation will provide security staff with the ability to, where reasonable:

- require any person entering, attempting to enter or inside the premises where court proceedings are conducted to identify himself or herself and provide information to assess their security risk;

- search, without a warrant, any person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted;

- search, without a warrant and using reasonable force if necessary, any person who is in custody where

court proceedings are conducted or who is being transported to or from such premises, or any property in the custody or care of that person.

I would like to emphasize that the legislation does not compel a person entering or attempting to enter a courthouse to submit to a search, identify himself or herself or provide information. They can simply walk away at any time. However, if they persist in entering the courthouse after refusing to provide information or submit to a search, court security personnel can (a) refuse entry and/or demand that a person leave the premises, and (b) use reasonable force if necessary to exclude or remove the person.

The proposed legislation also limits the types of essential public infrastructure it covers to prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities. Adding other categories of infrastructure would require amendments to the act, not just a new regulation. It would therefore be open to debate in this very House. The process for changing an act is very transparent and open, and the content of any proposed amendments would be subject to public debate.

There is also one important aspect of the PWPA that we have not replicated. The PWPA gives guards the authority to exercise their powers in the “approaches” to a public work. The approach to a facility was a concern for Mr. McMurtry and civil liberties groups because it is vague and hard to define. We listened to those concerns and we acted. This proposed bill would outline specified powers for guards that can only be used on the premises, and these powers would not apply off the premises. Since the approach falls outside the premises of the nuclear facility, any security issues should be addressed in partnership with the police of the jurisdiction.

Our government recognizes and echoes Ontarians' value and celebration of human and civil rights. We have a responsibility to Ontarians to ensure that our courts and critical infrastructure are protected. We have an equally great responsibility to protect and strengthen their civil liberties, like the freedom of assembly, and the principles of an open and transparent justice system. I believe that this legislation does indeed strike that necessary balance.

This is legislation that has been tabled a third time, the first two times going through ample debate on the floor of this House. The second time it was tabled, it worked its way, as I mentioned earlier, through committee, where the committee members did extensive, good work on this bill. They listened to many witnesses, important stakeholders that came forward. They undertook amendments to the bill. Many of the amendments that were put forward by the opposition parties are now incorporated in this bill. The bill that we see today, the bill that is being subject to second reading debate, is the bill that was amended through the committee process in the previous Parliament. It is due time that we, hopefully, expedite the debate and the passage of this bill in this House, given its importance in ensuring that not only we repeal an outdated piece of legislation in the PWPA but also have a new regime in place around the security of critical

infrastructure like our courthouses, electricity-generating facilities and nuclear facilities.

This work has been done with the advice of former Attorney General and Chief Justice McMurtry, and his work has been well inputted in this particular bill. I really hope to be able to pass this bill with the consensus of all members in the House, given the tremendous amount of work that has been put into this bill by all members. I want to thank all the members who have been strong advocates in making sure that we have a new law in place when it comes to securing our critical infrastructure and for the work they did through the consultation process and through clause-by-clause in the committee. I am confident that they will see their hard work reflected in this bill.

Most importantly, we heard from our partners, we heard from civil liberty groups, we heard from community safety partners and we heard from the opposition. Now is the time to act, and I urge all members in this House to support this important legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: In my two minutes, I just want to share a few things when it comes to this particular bill that the minister has brought forward: Bill 35, the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act.

I have some concerns. I think a gentleman—his name was Tommy Douglas, if I recall—made a comment one time: He said, “The government, I submit, is using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut.” He made that famous statement after Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act in response to the October Crisis in 1970.

We see a lot of situations here—and this pertains to the G20. I fully respect the fact that we do need to have security measures. To the extent, perhaps, that the minister is suggesting in his deliberation—we question that to a degree. We will be supporting it anyway. We’ll help approve it through second reading.

But again, it’s just a huge, huge bill. Some of the measures—it’s repealing the Public Works Protection Act as one. There are also amendments to the Police Services Act. So there are a number of concerns that we do have within the bill. I know it has been brought forward and has fallen off the table a few times as well, but we’ll work hard to help get this bill passed through second reading and get it into committee, and we’ll see where it goes from there. It may come out with a few amendments as well, as they usually do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to raise a number of issues, and I’m glad that the minister has just spoken; I can respond to the minister. There are a number of issues with this bill, particularly when it comes to civil liberties. I ask the minister to just double-check with the civil liberties associations if they really are in line with it. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has complained

about it and raised a number of serious issues with this bill, and those serious issues continue to persist.

In a free and democratic society, we want to ensure that courts are accessible, that they’re transparent, that people are willing and able to attend court. Currently, the provision that requires you to identify yourself to enter a courthouse—I attended courts regularly before when I was a defence lawyer. No one identified themselves. They would walk into a court. You’d walk through a metal detector. If there were any weapons or anything dangerous, they would be screened, and if there was nothing else, you went on your way. No one was asked to provide information to assess their risks. These are chilling. On the ability for people to enter a courthouse, these are barriers that discourage people from accessing the courts. This is not the right way to go.

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To further infringe on our constitutional rights to be free from arbitrary search and seizure, this bill says you can immediately search somebody or their car. Just because they are entering a courthouse, you can search their car—without any reasonable grounds, without any evidentiary basis for it. It also says you can search not only the car that they’re driving, but the car in which they are a passenger. Again, that is a serious infringement of civil liberties. There are no grounds provided for that.

I know the minister is a very reasonable individual. I’m hoping he’ll look at this. These are some serious areas.

There are some other things that are important. We absolutely support the repeal of the Public Works Protection Act. We need to repeal that. It is far too broad. But to replace it with something that is onerous, something that is denying civil liberties in a courthouse scenario, is not the right way to go. So I ask the government to certainly look at these serious problems with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I’m pleased to respond to my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on Bill 35, the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act.

I think as legislators we understand that the most important role that we play is ensuring the safety and security of the people that we represent. I appreciate very much the comments from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. We do have to strike a balance. That’s what we have done with this bill. I’m encouraged by the support from the member opposite as well.

We’re replacing a piece of legislation that was enacted in World War II, so it’s quite outdated. We had a report by the Ombudsman that made a suggestion to us that there were concerns that were raised because of what happened at the G20. We asked the Honourable Roy McMurtry, former chief justice, to review this, and he recommended that we replace the legislation. We listened to the Ombudsman. We listened to Justice McMurtry. So this new act is modern, transparent and focused on the

necessary security at our courthouses, our nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities.

This is the third time this legislation has been introduced. We do have a very large-scale event coming up in the next year in the Pan Am Games. I think that it's important that we move this legislation forward. It's important for the security and the safety of the people that we represent, and I encourage all members to support this bill to get it to second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Comments? The member from Elgin—Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. You should know that, since our ridings bump into each other. I'm glad to see you there in the chair today.

I'd just like to add a few comments to this bill and thank the House leader of the government side for giving his little deputation on the legislation.

I'm shocked by how this government hasn't time-allocated this bill yet. I'm sure that's in the works somehow. It seems that every bill we want to discuss in this Legislature is time-allocated—which totally takes away from the ability of members such as myself having time to actually debate the legislation and bring their points of view forward—through the insurance bill and any of the health bills that we've gone through. I commend you for not time-allocating this bill.

However, I'm sure when I sit down he'll have a time allocation motion coming forward to push this bill through quicker than possible. So I'm asking the government to bring democracy back to this Legislature. It really reflects upon what happened at the G20, where this government decided to use an archaic law and strip the powers from the people of this province to become a government abusing their power, per se, down at the G20 summit.

I'm glad they're looking at removing this bill. Because a bill that allows the government to take away the rights of the people of this province is dangerous for any government to hold, especially when this government is in power and does follow through with taking away people's rights. Just look at our windmill situation. Throughout rural Ontario, they come through and trample the rights of municipalities, no longer giving them the right to decide what they do with their own properties in their own municipalities. They just trample on their rights.

I'm glad they're making these changes because this government is out of control. It needs to rein in what it's doing and bring back democracy to the people of Ontario. Again, I look forward to the fact that we can actually have a bill that is not time-allocated. Hopefully, this continues for the rest of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has two minutes to wrap up.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the members from Chatham—Kent—Essex, Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Ottawa South and Elgin—Middlesex—London for their comments on my second reading leadoff.

Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we are, through this bill, Bill 35, repealing a piece of legislation that is 75 years old, something that came about as a result of the Second World War—legislation which, listening to all the comments that I heard in the House, clearly everybody agrees is too broad in its scope—and replacing it with a modern, focused piece of legislation that ensures the security of our critical infrastructure, like our courthouses, like our electricity generating and nuclear facilities, but also ensuring the right balance in terms of public participation and civil liberties.

This bill is a result of some really thoughtful people, like Mr. McMurtry, who took his time on the advice of the government to review the old legislation, the Public Works Protection Act, and gave advice as to what a new, modern piece of legislation that protects our civil liberties and our critical infrastructure should look like. That is the work that is done here, not to mention reaching out to so many important partners within the community and working with them in crafting this bill.

That includes the opposition parties, as well, Speaker. As I mentioned, this bill has gone through over 19 hours of debate. It has gone through the entire committee process, so it's not like none of these issues have been addressed before. Sixteen amendments that were put forward by the opposition are now incorporated in this bill.

What we have in front of us, Speaker, is the bill that was passed through the committee and that we have brought forward to make sure we are all on the same page in terms of having a bill that reflects our values and ensures that Ontario is safe for all its citizens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and to add to the debate on Bill 35, Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act. This actually is my first hour leadoff, Mr. Speaker. Normally, I would be in the Speaker's chair on Tuesday, but thankfully you have allowed me to deliver my remarks today, and I thank you for filling in for me. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

To really get to the subject of the matter of today's Bill 35, we need to turn back the clock on various events that led us to this particular piece of legislation being debated and why it was made necessary.

The real issue is why the bill actually came into being in the first place. Bill 34 was originally introduced in 2012 due to the events that followed the McGuinty cabinet's decision prior to the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto to invoke regulation 233/10 under the Public Works Protection Act. This made the G20 zone a "public work" between June 21 and June 28. The media coverage leading up to the summit circulated around reports of police being granted special powers of arrest up to five metres on either side of the security fencing in the G20 zone.

I'll spend a few moments in my remarks a little bit later on describing in greater detail the events leading up to G20, the mistakes that were made, and, of course, the fallout of those decisions.

There was widespread confusion leading up to and during the G20 summit about exactly where the special powers of arrest applied amongst the public, police and in the media. It was only after the summit was over that the government publicly acknowledged that the police were never granted powers of arrest five metres outside of the area designated a public work under the regulation. Many felt that this suggested that the government had deliberately misled the public to bluff protesters from occupying the area surrounding the G20 security zone.

In December 2010, provincial Ombudsman André Marin said the “illegal” regulation resulted in a “massive” breach of civil rights.

In April 2010, an independent inquiry led by Ontario’s former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry also found the Public Works Protection Act to be “beyond troubling” and recommended that it be repealed. In 2014, the government is finally ready to repeal the act.

1620

The government’s first attempt at repealing the PWPA came back in February 2012. Several amendments at that time were made after the bill was reviewed by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. The bill died on the order paper at third reading—with all-party support. Bill 34 was reintroduced as Bill 51 in April 2013, but died on the order paper at second reading when the election was called. There are no significant changes between last year’s Bill 51 and today’s Bill 35, just a small number of date changes and grammatical alterations.

Bill 35 seeks to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, a World War II-era measure to protect the province’s public works. It also seeks to clarify security measures dealing with courthouses, electricity generating facilities and nuclear facilities. These are all public works, in a sense, and to date are secured under the act.

Early in the 20th century, Ontario was a very different place. The province and our nation had to prepare for a wide variety of potential attacks on public infrastructure. Those were the days when strategies such as Defence Scheme No. 1 came to be. That was the famous Canadian plan for engagement should there be an American invasion. The Americans even had a plan of their own, entitled War Plan Red, created in 1930, to use in the event that war with Canada seemed imminent. It’s perhaps hard to imagine that countries that have grown so close would ever have needed to worry about the prospect of war. I know in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, we truly value the relationship we share with our neighbours to the south. They are incredibly valued trade partners and, more importantly, they are our friends.

In the years leading up to when the Public Works Protection Act was drafted and eventually enacted, these sorts of concerns were very real for the governments of the day. Canada had recently joined the war efforts against Hitler’s Nazi regime. There was a legitimate concern for Nazi saboteurs targeting vital public works here in the province of Ontario. The Ontario of today is vastly different, and I’m sure you would agree, Mr. Speaker. But this was the reality of the day for the people of Ontario and the former members of this Legislature.

In his throne speech, Lieutenant Governor Albert Matthews outlined the extraordinary context in which the legislation was being passed:

“We meet today under circumstances of the utmost gravity. The possibility of war, in which we are now engaged, was fully realized and debated by you at the last session, when you passed unanimously a resolution calling, in such event, for the complete mobilization of all our resources.

“Legislation calculated to give effect to the determination then expressed will be immediately submitted to you. You will be asked to pass measures designed to increase agricultural and industrial production, and for the protection of our vital public works and services.”

Again, that was a throne speech given by Lieutenant Governor Albert Matthews back then.

The government had made it a priority to in fact protect our province’s vital public works in the face of an unprecedented global threat. Even though the world was at war and Canada had devoted itself to war efforts, there were several members of this House who were concerned that legislation might be going too far. A.W. Roebuck, a Liberal MPP and former Attorney General, cautioned the House against the dangers that the Public Works Protection Act could bring:

“In time of war, we must give up the individuality which is our pride and boast in peacetime. We must give up many of our comforts, much of our freedom and even life itself if need be. But one of our most prized institutions has always been the right of public assembly, and in considering this bill, we must be careful that we do not suppress that individual thought and criticism that is so necessary to our welfare.” Again, that was a quote given, in fact, by A. W. Roebuck, a former Liberal MPP and former Attorney General. He would not have been able to comprehend what the Liberals of 2010 were capable of.

The provincial government of the day had asked their federal counterparts to provide members of the Canadian military to guard public works, such as Ontario’s hydro-electric facilities, as it was a top priority to protect these public works from sabotage. The federal government refused, and the Public Works Protection Act was the provincial response.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King who refused the province’s request. I want to make that perfectly clear, or else the government may try to blame Stephen Harper for all of this. That seems to be their response to everything. No matter the issue, the other side always seems to be able to pass the buck to the Prime Minister.

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I appreciate the fact that when you hit a hot button—we do get a reaction every once in a while, and that’s just fine.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It’s an easy target.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: But you see, Mr. Speaker, that seems to be their response to everything. No matter the issue, the other side always seems to pass the buck to the Prime Minister.

But let's get back to the matter at hand. We'll get back to the matter at hand. We'll allow our friends in the government to calm down. Calm down; have a drink of water; breathe.

Effectively a wartime relic, the Public Works Protection Act was rarely, if ever, amended. In his landmark Report of the Review of the Public Works Protection Act, the Honourable Roy McMurtry provided a detailed history of the act. In the report, McMurtry stated, "As the PWPA was enacted in 1939 as an emergency wartime statute, it is perhaps not surprising that it is relied upon today in only limited circumstances. Prior to the G20, the PWPA had only been relied upon to conduct searches at courthouses, in the context of providing courthouse security." Again, that was a quote given by the Honourable Roy McMurtry. The report goes on to say that since 2001 Ontario Power Generation has used the Public Works Protection Act "to empower its guards" while securing "its nuclear and non-nuclear power generating facilities." The history of protecting our electricity generating facilities and nuclear plants should be noted. It is incredibly important to safeguard these structures.

We talk about structures, and I refer back to my particular riding of Chatham—Kent—Essex, and of course, last week I actually posed a question in this House regarding shrapnel that actually had flown from one of the blades of an industrial wind turbine. That, in itself, is extremely dangerous. You never know where it's going to land; you don't know when it's going to happen. But we need to have safeguards in place. So I just thought I would mention that aspect. You can be sure that if something blew off a nuclear plant and landed several hundred feet away, people would be concerned. The government would be on it like a loose mule in a corn patch—I didn't write that.

So you wonder why there isn't that same sense of urgency for this issue. But to be fair, the Minister of—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: That was someone else?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Yes, but I like the quote. It was great. It was a great little story: a loose mule in a corn patch, my goodness' sakes.

But we need to have that sense of urgency. To be fair, the Minister of Energy has said that he'll be looking into the matter, and I believe that it will in fact be looked into.

In addition to protecting our courthouses, the protection of utilities, such as power generating stations, is a legitimate use of the broad-sweeping act. But what happens when the broad powers of the Public Works Protection Act are abused by a reckless government keen on suppressing free speech?

This brings us back to the summer of 2010. It was announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper that Huntsville would host the G8 summit from June 25 to June 26 and that Toronto would hold the G20 summit from June 26 to June 27. It was then confirmed that the G20 summit would be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

1630

For the G8 summit in Huntsville, the OPP was the local police service with jurisdiction. The G8 summit

took place without major incident. In committee hearings for Bill 34, the original version of the bill we are debating today, OPP Deputy Commissioner Larry Beechey noted, "The Ontario Provincial Police did not request or utilize the designation of the Public Works Protection Act for its policing role in the G8 summit."

It was a different story here in Toronto. At the time, the minister responsible and many other members of cabinet stated that they were simply acting on the demands of the Toronto police. In a letter to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services—former MPP Rick Bartolucci—dated back on May 23, 2010, Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair did indeed ask for additional powers under the Public Works Protection Act, but I want to clarify specifically what was asked for. Here is what he asked for, and this is a quote from Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair: "[W]e request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to designate the area of, or highways within, the intended security perimeter as a public work for the period of June 21, 2010, through the end of the summit on June 27, 2010."

You can understand why the Toronto chief of police would make such a demand. In the run-up to the G20, global leaders had been subject to terrorist threats. In 2005, on the second day of the G8 summit in London, suicide bombers killed more than 50 people on the subway and on a bus. There are legitimate security concerns, and if I was a police officer, I would hope that proper security protocols were put in place for such an event.

At no point did Toronto's chief of police ask the government to hide the passage of regulation 233/10—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There are a number of audible conversations taking place right over here, and I'd have to ask the members to quiet down so that I can hear the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex, if they would, please.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: So, again, at no point did Toronto's chief of police ask the government to hide the passage of regulation 233/10, nor did Toronto police advise the government to keep the revelation from the Legislature, which was sitting at the time.

On June 3, 2010, regulation 233/10 was issued under the Public Works Protection Act. The regulation had the effect of designating areas of the downtown core that were not already designated as public works. The regulation was passed in secret, without being brought to the House. Now, remember, this act was originally brought into effect—I'm talking way back—to protect Ontario from Nazi saboteurs at the onset of World War II, yet it was recklessly used by the Liberals in 2010 during peacetime.

The act's key provision in section 3, which states that a guard appointed under the act or a peace officer may "require any person entering or attempting to enter any public work or any approach thereto to furnish his or her name and address, to identify himself or herself and to state the purpose for which he or she desires to enter the public work."

In addition to these identification requirements, section 3 permits a warrantless search of any person entering or attempting to enter a public work, as well as any vehicle which is suspected of having been in the charge or under the control of any such person.

Now, the definition of “public work” in section 1 of the act is very broad and includes any railway, canal, highway, bridge, power works and any provincial and any municipal public building. It also includes other building, place or work designated as a public work. This is what allowed a large area of downtown Toronto to be designated as public work back at that time.

If there’s a refusal to comply with a direction made under the act, that person may be subject to a fine of up to \$500 and an imprisonment of up to two months. This is the section of the act that gave police the ability to detain people without a crime taking place.

Surely a government using such a powerful tool that effectively strips away the rights of citizens would find it necessary to inform the public about it, but sadly, this wasn’t the case.

A Globe and Mail article from last June described how the government made no attempt to clarify the application of the law to police, which led to historic mass arrests:

“Police, however, misinterpreted the law to mean that they could stop, search and arrest anyone who came within five metres of the outside of the fence. Officers even cited the law blocks away from the summit site as justification for arbitrarily detaining and searching people. The province allowed this misunderstanding to continue throughout the summit, which saw the largest mass arrests in Canadian history.”

This is an absolutely shocking fact, Mr. Speaker: The largest mass arrests in Canadian history occurred in peacetime under the Liberal government. This is something that should be common knowledge among the people of Ontario.

To reiterate another point from the Globe and Mail article, the province allowed this misunderstanding to continue. The provincial government decided to protect itself instead of the people of this province. Instead of admitting what they have done—gee, what a novel idea: admitting what you’ve done—the Liberals stayed quiet and allowed innocent people to be detained like criminals in excess of 24 hours.

Instead of doing the right thing and informing police of exactly which areas were covered by the regulations, they let the front-line officers take the brunt of public backlash. Our front-line officers work tirelessly to protect the people of Ontario, and they should be protected by their government. They should not be left to take the fall for the errors of this government.

You can certainly guess what happened when the province changed the law without proper public consultation or notice. There is a pattern there, Speaker. There was mass confusion amongst the general population, even among the police officers. When it was all said and done, more than 1,000 people were detained over the

summit weekend in what is considered the largest mass arrest in Canada’s peacetime history. Several hundred of those detained were released without any charges being laid against them. But keep in mind that the Liberal government was directly responsible for this historic event as they changed the rules of the game without any public scrutiny.

This breach of liberties was criticized heavily by many, including judges, human rights lawyers, professors, journalists and Ontario’s Ombudsman, André Marin. The Ombudsman described the powder keg that the government’s secrecy and total lack of transparency caused. I feel that the most powerful words came from Ontario’s Ombudsman himself. While the government may casually dismiss the concerns of the opposition as partisan, the Ombudsman had no partisan agenda. He’s an impartial and tenacious watchdog whose primary concern is protecting the people of Ontario. In his report, titled *Caught in the Act*, Ombudsman André Marin had the following to say:

“Regulation 233/10, passed to enhance security during the G20 summit, should never have been enacted. It was likely unconstitutional. The effect of regulation 233/10, now expired, was to infringe on freedom of expression in ways that do not seem justifiable in a free and democratic society. Specifically, the passage of the regulation triggered the extravagant police authority found in the Public Works Protection Act, including the power to arbitrarily arrest and detain people and to engage in unreasonable searches and seizures. Even apart from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the legality of regulation 233/10 is doubtful. The Public Works Protection Act under which it was proclaimed authorizes regulations to be created to protect infrastructure, not to provide security to people during events. Regulation 233/10 was therefore probably invalid for having exceeded the authority of the enactment under which it was passed. These problems should have been apparent, and given the tremendous power regulation 233/10 conferred on the police, sober and considered reflection should have been given to whether it was appropriate to arm officers with such authority. This was not done. The decision of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who sponsored the regulation, was unreasonable.”

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That, Speaker, was a quote again. I reference Ontario’s Ombudsman, André Marin. That was his quote.

There are a few points made here by the Ombudsman that are worth repeating. This likely unconstitutional regulation should never have happened. The problems found in passing the regulation should have been apparent. Sober and considered reflection should have been given. On all of these basic aspects of good governance, this provincial government received a failing grade.

The Ombudsman goes on to say—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, you know what? There are rewrites, and you might get a chance to maybe make it better at some point in time.

The Ombudsman goes on to say in the report that even setting aside the obvious constitutional challenges that such a reckless regulation would bring, the passage of the regulation itself was poorly handled.

“Perversely, by changing the rules of the game without real notice, regulation 233/10 acted as a trap for the responsible—those who took the time to educate themselves about police powers before setting out to express legitimate political dissent.”

In the run-up to G20, many brushed up on police powers and civil freedoms, to ensure that they would not be breaking any laws and also to be aware of what police could and could not reasonably—emphasis on “reasonably”—ask for. Those who tried to do the right thing were punished by the government and set up in a “trap,” to use the Ombudsman’s wording.

By keeping the enactment of regulation 233/10 well under wraps, the public had no way of knowing that the rules of the game had in fact changed and that their everyday rights had been restricted.

Each and every Ontarian should read the Ombudsman’s report Caught in the Act. I know there’s a lot of talk about changing curriculums, but perhaps this report can be added to Ontario’s civics classes or history classes.

The decision that was made in the backrooms of power by the Liberal government is the type of decision that puts the very fabric of our institutions at stake. The Premier made it a special point to mention protecting the social fabric of Ontario during the election campaign, but the actions of the Liberal government in 2010 represent an unraveling of our free society.

By invoking these regulations in the Public Works Protection Act—a wartime relic, by the way—in peacetime, the government effectively declared war on its own people. It was shameful abuse of a law designed to protect the people and public works of this province in a time where the world was at war, not to stifle legitimate expression of dissent in times of peace.

And all this occurred without proper public scrutiny. There was no proper notice, no consultation and no legislative debate. Thankfully, the people of Ontario were able to get answers in the form of the Ombudsman’s report and the McMurtry report.

In his report, Justice McMurtry described the failure of the government to give sufficient public notice. He goes on to say, “I have concerns whether adequate notice was given to the public, especially in light of the fact that the regulation was not published in the Ontario Gazette until it had already—already—“been revoked.”

This lack of adequate public notice puts both citizens and front-line police officers directly in harm’s way.

Nathalie Des Rosiers, general counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, stated at the time of the report’s release, “By using, cleverly, a piece of legislation which is obscure and outdated, I think it created significant misunderstanding and undermined the public’s ability to obey the law.”

Simply put, Speaker, it’s ridiculous to expect people to obey a law that they have no idea exists. Even the law-makers of this province in opposition weren’t aware of the existence of this regulation.

In a legal analysis of the Public Works Protection Act, McMurtry argued that “vague laws” undermine “two fundamental values of our legal system. Firstly, individuals are not provided with sufficient guidance as to what behaviour a law prohibits.” This is incredibly important. The lack of public awareness of the legal changes led to what was referred to by the Ombudsman as a “trap.” The report goes on to say, “Secondly, those in charge of enforcing the law are not provided with clear guidance as to how to enforce it. A vague law can lead to inconsistent and arbitrary enforcement.”

This is exactly what happened in June 2010, Mr. Speaker. The public was unclear on what their basic rights and freedoms were. In their eyes, and under the normal protection of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, peaceful protesters were committing no crime as they exhibited their lawful right of assembly. Police officers, not having been given clear guidance on how to enforce regulation 233/10, were left on their own by the province to arbitrarily apply it. This led to increased tensions between officers and protesters.

I would say that this lack of public clarity puts officers at risk. To this day, officers of the Toronto Police Service have to deal with the baggage of G20. They have incredibly difficult jobs: to preserve and protect the security of every citizen of our nation’s largest city while also trying to keep themselves safe so they can go home to their families at the end of the day. We owe it to them to make sure legislation makes their jobs easier instead of secretly passing regulations that put them in harm’s way.

In the conclusion of the report, Justice McMurtry quoted the late Justice Jackson of the United States Supreme Court: “Justice Jackson ... stated that every emergency power, once conferred, ‘lies about like a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority that can bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need.’” Indeed, it is a balance between the security of the public and preserving our fundamental rights and freedoms that all governments should strive for.

McMurtry goes on to say “that we live in difficult times with constant threats both domestically and from abroad. The police clearly need to be given adequate powers to carry out their duties. The police use their expertise on a daily basis to assess the powers they require. In instances when they take action that exceeds their powers, their actions are examined by various mandated bodies. This process, I believe, results in the proper balance between police powers and individual rights and freedoms. Therefore, any legislation that purports to grant special police powers must be specific and direct and developed in consultation with stakeholders and tested through thorough debate in our transparent democratic system.”

Compare this ideal process of open and transparent government to the way the Liberals acted in 2010. There

was no involvement of relevant stakeholders, no opportunity for them to provide meaningful input before regulation 233/10 was passed; it was not presented to this Legislature and there was no debate in our transparent democratic system. Instead, the government worked behind closed doors and irresponsibly allowed the regulation to fly under the radar.

Critics of the outdated Public Works Protection Act have also pointed out that since highways are public works, police would technically be allowed to conduct a warrantless search of any individual who enters any public highway here in the province of Ontario under the statute. Mr. Speaker, thankfully, the police officers across our great province have exercised some discretion and have not used this interpretation of the legislation.

Our officers do great work here in Ontario and we are grateful for what they do. But having outdated laws on the books that deal in such broad strokes is worrisome. This sort of example, while thankfully hypothetical, speaks to the need to repeal such horribly outdated legislation and replace it with laws that are more appropriate for the modern day. We need to ensure that laws are appropriate for current times and benefit citizens, instead of leaving them vulnerable to having their rights stripped away with minimal scrutiny.

1650

I and many Ontarians are pleased to see that this government is seeking once again to repeal this outdated legislation that they exploited only just a few years ago. As we have seen, old and publicly overlooked legislation can be used as a tool by governments looking to suppress their people in an effort to take away their ability, their fundamental right, to speak out against it.

The ramifications of the government's decision to suspend civil liberties and freedoms continue to be felt even now, several years after the fact. In a unanimous ruling over the summer, the three judges of the Divisional Court overturned a lower court decision that refused to allow the hundreds of Torontonians who were detained in the mass arrests during the G20 summit:

"If the appellant's central allegation is proven, the conduct of the police violated a basic tenet of how police in a free and democratic society are expected to conduct themselves. Their actions, if proven, constitute an egregious breach of the individual liberty interests of ordinary citizens."

The panel went on to say that "it is not hyperbole to see it as being akin to one of the hallmarks of a police state." A panel of judges described the actions of this government as being akin to the "hallmarks of a police state."

Everyone in this chamber has a tremendous amount of respect for our judges as fair and impartial arbiters, but surely they would never use a term lightly and would never evoke the words "police state" unless the government's actions were enough to warrant it.

One class action lawsuit is spearheaded by office administrator Sherry Good, who is representing the 900 people who claim that they were wrongfully detained,

including those "kettled" at the intersection of Queen and Spadina. A second class action suit is led by Thomas Taylor on behalf of over 800 people who were detained in a makeshift holding facility on Eastern Avenue. He described the harrowing situation in a press release: "Many were held for 24 hours or more in overcrowded wire cages and in freezing temperatures without enough food or water. All of this just because we exercised our right to speak freely. Most Canadians that I have spoken with cannot believe that this happened here. It should not be allowed to happen again."

Indeed, the suspension of basic rights and freedoms that outline our entire system of justice and governance—that should never be allowed again. As noted by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who was the critic back when the original version of this bill was debated a few years ago, cabinet was at the table for the passing of the regulation. Also at the table were Liberal members from Peterborough, Ottawa Centre, Ottawa–Orléans, Mississauga–Streetsville, Willowdale, the former member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Ajax–Pickering, and the former member for Algoma–Manitoulin. They have since lost a couple of those seats, perhaps in part for their collective silence on this secret regulation.

The cabinet and several additional members of the government were present when the G20 law was stamped in secret. Surely one of these members would have been at least somewhat concerned about the serious restriction of civil liberties that the regulation levied onto the people of this province that they are charged to serve. The House was sitting at the time, yet the matter was never brought up.

On November 1, 2010, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services responded to the universal criticism of the scandal, agreeing that "the ministry could have, and should have, handled the enactment of regulation 233/10 better." You don't say.

The minister went on to note that in the future, the government "would take greater care to ensure that the Ontario public is given more adequate notice of regulation changes of this nature"—more adequate notice in the sense that they would be given any notice at all. Indeed, the people of Ontario should be made aware of the arbitrary suspension of their rights. The fact that this government was able to pass such a restrictive regulation without any public scrutiny should be a sobering reminder of what misguided governments are capable of. This is effectively the largest systematic violation of sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that has ever occurred in our great country's history.

Many Torontonians were shocked to learn that they were required to present identification in the downtown core blocks away from the secure G20 zone. However, switching gears, many expect and accept the fact that they could be searched or asked to present identification when entering a building like a courthouse.

The Ontario Court of Appeal's decision in 2005 is the leading decision dealing with the subject of security

screening when entering a building such as a courthouse. In this case, a woman was found to be in possession of marijuana when she was searched entering the John Sopinka Courthouse in Hamilton. In her ruling, Madam Justice Esther Rosenberg concluded that this particular search was indeed constitutional. I will now read from a particularly pertinent section of the decision, and I quote what Madam Justice Rosenberg had to say:

“First, courthouse searches like the one carried out in this case are not conducted for the purpose of criminal investigation. The state and the individual are not antagonists in the same way that they are in a criminal investigation. The search is not conducted for the purpose of enforcing the criminal law or investigating a criminal offence.

“Second, even if the person has a reasonable expectation of privacy in their personal belongings when entering a courthouse, that expectation is considerably diminished. Prominent signs warn everyone that they will be subjected to a security search and that they are not permitted to bring weapons or dangerous items into the courthouse. Regrettably, in this day and age, people expect that they will be subject to some kind of security screening when entering prominent public buildings such as courthouses or the Legislature.”

This is a reality that we all understand all too well. Members and visitors of this Legislature are reminded daily of the security presence in this building. Anyone who enters the building is asked to verify their identification or state their name and reason for coming to Queen's Park. Visitors wishing to watch question period or even those who may be interested in watching daily proceedings or the debate of bills like this one have to empty their pockets and pass through a metal detector.

I would say that, all in all, people are accepting of these types of searches and requirements to provide identification in a place such as a Legislature or courthouse. Over the years that I've had the privilege to serve the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex as their representative in this place, I've had the honour of hosting numerous guests from my riding. They've all had the pleasure of meeting our security staff here, and they were all handled respectfully. Those guests who have decided to observe question period or perhaps I should say experience question period—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Yes, that's better.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is an experience.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is, because it really and truly is an experience. You're absolutely right. Oftentimes they will sit in the members' gallery—and I've seen them go through the metal detectors myself. Each time the searches were reasonable. As Justice Rosenberg pointed out, these searches are not conducted for the purpose of enforcing criminal law or investigating a criminal offence; they're conducted to protect the members of this Legislature. The countless staff who work here every day and visitors themselves are all benefactors of this practice in the sense that they all enjoy a safe environment here at Queen's Park.

It's definitely a balancing act for security here. We want this place to be open and available to the public, but we are ultimately responsible for their safety. I feel, and I'm sure that this feeling would be held by every member in this House, that legislative security does a fine job of allowing the public to visit and utilize this place while simultaneously keeping us all safe.

We were all shaken by the tragedy that recently occurred in Ottawa. We all understand the need to keep our institutions, whether it's a Legislature or a courtroom, safe. The Supreme Court of Canada has held that, “A search is reasonable if it is authorized by law, if the law itself is reasonable and if the manner in which the search was carried out is reasonable.”

1700

By the measures set out here by the Supreme Court, it is clear that regulation 233/10 wasn't worth the paper it was written on. But it did come with a very real cost for hundreds who were detained during the G20 protests.

Bill 34 of 2012 was the Liberal government's first attempt to make amends after they oversaw the largest mass arrests in Canadian history. While it incorporated many of the recommendations of the McMurtry report, Bill 34 received plenty of criticism from expert stakeholder groups. The Criminal Lawyers' Association was concerned that there was no exception in the legislation for counsel. This concern was shared by the County and District Law Presidents' Association, and the Ontario Bar Association also made similar calls for a streamlined entry process for lawyers.

Our court system is heavily bogged down as it is, as I'm sure the government is well aware. While we need to protect our courtrooms and keep them safe, we must also keep them accessible and avoid overly restrictive policies that cause delays in the system. I'm glad to see that the government took these critiques into consideration when drafting Bill 51 and subsequently Bill 35.

As I have mentioned, there were a considerable number of concerns that stakeholders had with Bill 34. Our party carefully considered the recommendations of experts and concerned associations and introduced several amendments to strengthen the bill.

The following PC motions were carried at standing committee and incorporated into Bill 34, now Bill 35, and I'm very pleased to relate a few of those.

Schedule 3, Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2012:

—add a definition of “premises where a restricted access facility is located” that would include any real property, including buildings and structures on that property that are under direct control of its operator;

—change the power of security personnel to “request” that an individual produce identification, information, or submit to a search to “require.” This language is more consistent with the powers of court security personnel under schedule 2;

—remove the requirement for a person to consent to a search of the person, his or her vehicle, or property;

—clarify that only vehicles located on the premises could in fact be searched. We also, in our amendments,

were much appreciative of the fact that the government also said that yes, okay, let's add 'found on' to the arrest and offences provisions to make it an offence to be found on prohibited areas on the premises;

—add new arrest and offence provisions in relation to any person who obstructs or interferes with a peace officer in the exercise of the powers conferred by the act;

—strike out the regulation-making authority to clarify the extent of any premises where a particular restricted access facility is located.

Now, Speaker, these changes were all adopted and put into the reintroduced Bill 51 of the last session earlier this year. But it died on the order paper with the election. So here we are with Bill 35 before us. It's an attempt by the government to rectify a problem that should have never happened. Yes, this bill addresses many of the recommendations of the McMurtry report, and yes, this bill addresses several of the concerns of the Ombudsman's damning report. But what it doesn't do is offer any sort of penalty. The minister responsible for, as the Ombudsman described the ordeal, the largest violation of Canadian rights in the Charter era, did not receive any punishment. The cabinet and the hangers-on who sat around the table, knowing full well the gravity of the decision that was being secretly made, made a clear and deliberate choice. They could have stood up for the civil liberties of the people of Ontario. They could have followed their hearts instead of their political marching orders. But they didn't. And in the days that followed they could have informed the public of what happened. They could have gone to the press to clear the whole mess up. But they didn't.

I have a saying, Speaker. It's this: If "ifs" and "buts" were candies and nuts, we'd all have a Merry Christmas.

There were a lot of things they could have done but they didn't do. So when it came time for them to choose whether to serve the needs of their party or the needs of the people, they kept their own constituents in the dark.

I'd like to spend the next few minutes breaking down the bill before us today. Given that we've reviewed the history that led us to this moment, we can now begin to discuss this bill on its own merits.

Schedule 1 of Bill 35 seeks to repeal the Public Works Protection Act. The schedule comes into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor. As noted by Justice McMurtry, the overly broad and vague language of the PWPA does not strike the required balance with individual rights and freedoms.

We certainly hope that there's no funny business between the eventual passage of this bill and the day that the PWPA is repealed. Hopefully the government won't be tempted to pass any secret regulations for old times' sake. I fully support this element of the bill, and I would imagine that most of the members in this Legislature from all parties would support that element. The Public Works Protection Act is an archaic war measure that has no place in modern-day Ontario.

Schedule 2, the amendments to the Police Services Act: This amends the Police Services Act of 1990 to

address court security. The proposed changes would in fact ensure that court security guards would have the powers to require all those entering a courthouse to show identification, to provide a reason for being there, subject themselves to a search and, if deemed necessary, allow security officers to search the vehicle they arrived in without a warrant. Anyone refusing to identify themselves or failing to leave on demand could face fines of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment for up to 60 days.

Many are concerned with the vehicle search portion of this bill. Some have questioned, for example: If you parked your car a couple of blocks away from the courthouse, could your car be subjected to a warrantless search? Well, I look forward to hearing from concerned stakeholders regarding this section of the bill, as courtroom security was the most contentious element of prior legislation. I'm sure that some of my colleagues will have some specific concerns from their own communities as the courts of this province come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes.

Schedule 3 enacts the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014. This provides for the appointment of security personnel as peace officers and sets out security regulations for electricity generating and nuclear facilities that are similar to those set out above for courthouses.

Firstly, it gives security personnel at these facilities the power to require a person who wishes to enter the premises or who is on the premises (1) to produce identification, and (2) to provide information for the purpose of assessing whether that person poses a security risk. Further, it gives security personnel the authority to search without warrant:

(1) a person who wishes to enter the premises or who is on the premises;

(2) any vehicle that the person is driving or in which the person is a passenger while the person is on, entering or attempting to enter the premises; and

(3) any property in the custody or care of that person.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the schedule itself acts on the recommendations of the McMurtry report.

In the report, it is recommended that "if the PWPA is to be repealed, it is imperative that those who secure our nuclear and power generating facilities be given the requisite specific legislative powers to do so."

I also found some of the regulations within this bill to be particularly noteworthy.

Regulation (g) allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council the ability to make regulations "providing for oversight of persons appointed under section 2, including, for example, providing processes for making and addressing complaints, reviewing actions and decisions, and conducting inspections and investigations."

Cabinet is allowed, under this regulation, to provide oversight of persons appointed under the act to provide security services. Oversight is usually not this government's strong suit, as we've seen from time to time. The Ornge air ambulance scandal was not the result of effective oversight. EHealth's total failure is not the

result of effective oversight. The government is constantly surprised by the actions of people they are responsible for overseeing. One would hope that the government provides meaningful oversight in this case.

I'm also a little bit concerned that it will be this government's cabinet that will be providing processes for making and addressing complaints. Over the past few years, we have seen a government that will do whatever it takes to minimize issues and keep important details from the public's scrutiny. This is the same government that is calling on the justice committee to write a report on the unprecedented gas plant scandal, which saw over \$1 billion of public funds squandered, without the testimony of key witnesses directly related to the illegal deletion of documents.

1710

The cabinet of this government will be in charge of laying the groundwork for conducting inspections and investigations of individuals covered under this act. One can only begin to imagine what processes this cabinet could dream up.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I see that the time is winding down on my hour, and I'd like to transition to some closing thoughts on the matter. I said this earlier today, but it's worth repeating, in the words of Tommy Douglas, "The government, I submit, is using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut." He made that famous statement after Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act in response to the October crisis in 1970. There seems to be a trend of Liberal leaders invoking over-reaching, broad-strokes legislation that severely restricts the rights of Canadian citizens. While Tommy Douglas wasn't with us in 2010, his comment is just as applicable when assessing this case.

The Liberal government's legacy will be forever linked to incidents such as the G20 scandal and the secret passage of regulation 233/10. This directly resulted in the largest mass arrests in Canada's history. You can certainly understand why they want to quietly repeal the legislation that they so recently used as a tool against their own people. People should know that many members of cabinet, including the current Premier, sat on their hands and said nothing to stop the greatest restriction of individual rights and freedoms that our country has ever seen. No amount of positive legislation will change that fact. It is my sincere hope, Mr. Speaker, that such a violation of individual rights and freedoms never again—never again—occurs in this great province.

The abuse of power of this government, including the silence of several members who are still a part of this government, should never happen again. The debacle of the G20 arrests and regulation 233/10 left a stain on this city and province. The actions of this government have been described as akin to a police state. The civil liberties and freedoms that generations of soldiers have fought and died for were taken away in the name of political expediency.

Bill 35 offers us a chance to prevent such an injustice from occurring again. At the very least, it will prevent

abuses through the Public Works Protection Act, which will thankfully be repealed.

Bill 35 is straightforward. It addresses the concerns of former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry, who called for the repeal of the Public Works Protection Act in the months following the G20 scandal. It also seeks to put in place specific legislation dealing with the security at our province's courthouses, electricity generating facilities and nuclear facilities that are currently protected under the broad scope of the Public Works Protection Act. This is how these sorts of matters should be handled, with specific legislation instead of through laws that are far too broad in their scope and leave the door open for abuse by irresponsible government down the road.

This legislation removes the minister's discretion to grant special powers of arrest, powers which this government clearly abused. However, this bill does not address the profound lack of judgment that was demonstrated by the McGuinty cabinet and by several additional members who were at the table. During and in the wake of the G20 summit, they lacked a basic dedication to protecting fundamental rights and freedoms that should be held sacred by each member of this Legislature.

With the millions of dollars in cuts already planned in education, in addition to the cuts or tax hikes that will come if this government is even going to have a hope of balancing the budget in the next few years, there will be plenty of protests happening here at Queen's Park. Thanks to the actions of this government in 2010, people who assembled on the south lawn of Queen's Park were forcibly removed. I can only hope that this government is more tolerant of dissenting voices than they were only a few short years ago.

To the members of the government who were around and said nothing to protect the rights and freedoms of Ontarians, I sincerely hope that you have had a change of heart since 2010. To the new members of this Legislature, especially on the government side, let this historic example of abuse of power speak to the importance of proper notice, consultation and legislated debate. Surely regulation 233/10 would never have passed if members of this House were made aware of it.

I offer my support to Bill 35 at second reading. It is, in fact, my pleasure to do so. But do you want to know something? It is with a heavy heart that I acknowledge exactly why this is necessary in the first place.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Mike Harris had snipers on the roof for the teachers.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity. I believe it's a sincere privilege to address the people in this House. I find it a little bit disconcerting, though, when I hear members of the government going back 15, 20 years ago and so on and relating to things. Let's get relevant. We need to get relevant now and talk to the way it is now, not the way it was. You know you've made mistakes in the past before.

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Hey, to err is human; we get that. But you know what? You need to maybe put a button on it, if you know what I mean.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. If need be, if the buttons don't work, I'll get my sewing kit and sew it up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to rise in the House and comment on that most riveting hour-long presentation by the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, but I particularly liked how he was quoting Tommy Douglas. I really got a thrill out of that because, as we all know in this House, Tommy Douglas was declared the greatest Canadian, going back few years ago, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. But we're walking in Tommy's shoes over here. We haven't lost sight of the journey that Tommy Douglas was on, and when we hear members of the Conservative Party quote Tommy Douglas, I think we've come a long way.

I want to give you a quote from Tommy. Tommy Douglas said, "The greatest way to defend" democracy "is to make it work."

"Unless democracy can give people full stomachs, clothing to wear, decent houses to live in, educational opportunities, security in their old age, health services for themselves and their families when they need it—unless democracy can do that, democracy will have failed."

"It's your job and mine to make democracy work."

That's Tommy Douglas.

When I hear the member opposite talk about some of the things that we may be facing in this bill, such as, if I give my friend Mike a ride to the courthouse and I leave or I go to Tim Hortons to wait for him, and if something happens with Mike in the courthouse and they come after me because I drove him there, and they don't need a warrant to search my car, that's not democracy. This bill needs to be fixed. This bill is almost there, but it needs amendments; it needs to be fixed. I certainly hope that when it gets to committee, you'll finally listen to the democratic voice on this side of the House: the Tommy Douglas voice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I always love these debates when everything is very black and white and there's the black hats and the white hats, and Tommy Douglas is a saint and Pierre Trudeau is evil and dah dah dah dah dah.

I lived through the War Measures Act in Quebec. I also saw Pierre Laporte kidnapped and assassinated, and fires and explosions going off at mailboxes in my neighbourhood that killed people. There was a reaction there that was easy for some people to freeload on because we were in a state of complete insurrection. It's easy to look at these things through the rear-view mirror, Mr. Speaker, and I think we need a bit more balance.

1720

Had Barack Obama been shot when he was here in Toronto, we would be having a different conversation here. I have to tell you, having hosted an international conversation, how the federal government picked downtown Toronto for the G20—where you've got more

pipes, more passageways, more tunnels and more windows to shoot people from than anywhere else—it was insane. I was mayor of a city that hosted the Pan Am Games. There was not one security threshold that we would have allowed. You had to do it. Mayor Miller suggested you do it over at the—

Mr. Arthur Potts: The CNE.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —at the CNE grounds, which were surrounded by water. This was insanity by Mr. Harper. It was the stupidest thing, and it left the city of Toronto, the mayor of Toronto and us with an unmanageable security risk. So if you want to blame someone, blame the feds. The final thing—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm not saying this because—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You always find someone to blame.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No. You talk to any security expert who will back up that decision—I don't care; from the most card-carrying Republican or a CIA agent, no one supported it.

The other thing is, what I and Bob Rae did—and what we should do—is get intervener status back so we can take the federal government to court, because what we tried to do after was sue the federal government for this horrible thing, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which the Conservatives took away. We need to restore that so we can restore democracy here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to join this debate and salute the member, my colleague from Chatham-Kent, because—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And Essex. How could I forget Essex?

He talked about violation of rights and freedoms. The bottom line to all of this: When you violate rights, when you violate freedoms, when you have a lack of proper notice and consultation, it leads to mistrust. That's what we really have to focus on here. You can never legislate trust, and time and time again, this government is causing every sector in Ontario to mistrust them in terms of their actions and their intent.

We talk about democracy. It's interesting: I can't help but think of an announcement that was made today. The Minister of the Environment came out with an announcement today that actually was found to be very, very disappointing by a number of farm organizations in Ontario. It exercises the lack of trust that this government has in its farming organizations. It's disappointing, because the reality is, bee mortality has decreased 70%, and that is based on a report from Health Canada that was released today. It makes one suspect the announcement this morning, because when you talk to farm organizations, they thought they were working alongside this government, only to have the rug pulled out from under them. They're very, very disappointed with the announcement that this Minister of the Environment made

that was endorsed by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

You know what? This government, time and again, does not respect democracy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One last question or comment.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I sat here and listened very closely to my friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex, and a lot of the comments that he was making actually resonated with me.

The one thing we have to remember is that we had well over 1,000 people who were rounded up and held without any identified charges. Their rights were infringed upon. They didn't know why they were being held, why they were being rounded up. We had the application of this Public Works Protection Act. This is the process that we're taking in order to correct some of those measures. That's a good step in the right direction; nobody is disputing that fact. But those individuals, those 1,000 people—never do we want to see another 1,000 people affected that way—were denied their rights. They were denied their opportunity for a proper explanation as to why they were incarcerated the way they were. We have to learn from those mistakes.

We also have to make sure that we are not creating another layer of burdensome regulations which will discourage people from actually getting involved in our democratic process and particularly from participating in our judicial system by going into the courts.

I just want to say to my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh: You will always be safe in my vehicle, my friend. Nothing will harm you there, and I will make sure to take care of you all the time. I look forward to being in the House all the time when you use your quotes. It's such a pleasure being in here.

To the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, I really did listen to your comments. They were very valuable and they were instrumental to this debate. I hope the government takes to some of the comments you brought forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. We return to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex for his two-minute reply.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'd like to thank my colleagues from Windsor–Tecumseh and Algoma–Manitoulin; also, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, as well as the member from Huron–Bruce.

You look at G20. I know I spoke at great length about that and I was getting a little emotional about it—I'd call it passionate about it. That caused me to perhaps be overly sensitive to maybe a few comments that I had heard from the other side. You know what? We're human. If I offended anybody, I apologize for that. I do. But you know what? Let's learn from our mistakes. That's key. We're all going to make mistakes. Mistakes know no colours, no political party. They're there.

But you know what? The G20 summit was in fact a very unfortunate—the summit itself was good, but what

happened with regard to the police, the protesters and perhaps the overuse of their governing powers; the fact, too, that the government didn't do anything about that at the time—that's history now. We need to look at it and say, "All right."

In the event that we have something spectacular and great—and perhaps the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games could be very much an example of that—we're going to have security, and we need to look at it. Let's learn from our mistakes. Let's learn from our past.

We need to get this bill passed. There may be some amendments, as was pointed out by my colleagues, to make this bill even better, but let's get it in place because we don't want to have the rights and freedoms of people infringed upon in this great province and in this great country of Canada.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it was an honour and a privilege for me to stand before this Legislature today and to state my case for why we will, in fact, support Bill 35, the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay, sit back and relax. We have an hour together, folks.

Mr. Grant Crack: Half an hour.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Oh, it's just a half-hour. Well, if anyone wants to stay longer, you can stay longer. I encourage you all to enjoy.

Listen, someone asked me a question the other day—a Liberal colleague. He said, "There's not really that much difference between our parties." He said, "There's not really much ideologically different about our parties." I listened quietly and I said, "Okay, that's what you think." Well, I can tell you very clearly there is a huge ideological difference between what you're proposing in this bill and what we would propose.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You're far too right-wing for me.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Let me explain particularly to the minister without portfolio in the front seat there exactly why this bill is ideologically so different from what we would propose.

Let's set aside their initial problem. The Public Works Protection Act: There is absolutely no dispute about the fact that we need to repeal that act. We want to repeal it because it offers overly broad powers that strip people of their civil liberties, which resulted in one of the worst civil rights violations in the history of Ontario, in the history of this province, where over 1,000 people were rounded up, kept in metal barricades without any reason, without any justification. They were kept for three days without any charges. This is horrible. This happened because of the Public Works Protection Act.

It happened because this act was too broad, its powers weren't clearly defined and it was set up in a way that infringed on people's rights. Now what you're doing is you're replacing that act with a new act that does the exact same thing but does it in courthouses. I want to

understand. Where is the logic in that? How does that make any sense?

1730

I ask the Chair of Cabinet to answer this question to me when he gets a chance: Why, when you enter a courthouse, do you need to identify yourself? Where is the safety in having to identify yourself? Currently, in some of the busiest courthouses in the GTA, in the busiest courthouse in North America, which is Brampton, no one asks you to identify yourself. You walk into the courthouse and you go through a metal detector. If there are any weapons or dangerous material, that gets screened out and you go on your way. There's absolutely no need to have to identify yourself. That is so regressive, that is so chilling, on the principle—which we should all agree with—that an open court system is a hallmark of a democratic society.

If you believe in a democratic society, you have to believe that our courthouses need to be open, because people need to see that justice is being done. They don't only need to believe that there is potentially justice being done; they need to see it. And courts can't be obtuse. They can't be opaque. They need to be places where people can come in, they can see a court hearing proceed, they can see how evidence is called. They need to be able to experience that to actually believe that our justice system is fair. It's one of the hallmarks. Any society which is not free, which is not democratic—they don't have transparent courts. It's one of the first hallmarks. So you want to encourage people to actually go to a courthouse.

How do you encourage it? You make it easier. Anytime you want someone to go somewhere, if you make it difficult to go there, they won't go there. If you know now that there's a law that says if you go to a courthouse you'll have to identify yourself—well, what if I want to go watch a case that's maybe somewhat sensitive in nature? Maybe my friend was protesting, exercising his or her democratic right to dissent, was arrested—perhaps wrongfully—and I want to go and see what happens. I want to see if my friend is being treated fairly. I want to know if the court system here in Canada and here in Ontario is just. But I'm nervous because if I go to a court and they ask me who I am, maybe they'll look me up and maybe they'll find out that I was also at the protest. Maybe I'll get charged too. Maybe I'll get nervous. Why would you have to identify yourself to enter a courthouse? How does that make it more safe and secure? There's no evidence to suggest that's in any way safe.

More importantly, the fact that you have to provide information to the individual screening, the individual who is manning the doors, that you have to provide them with information so that they can assess your threat of risk—what type of information are you going to be asked? “What court are you going to? What case are you here for? Why are you here?” Why do you need to answer any of those questions? In fact, knowing that those questions could be posed to you would probably make you feel less comfortable going. You probably

don't want to go somewhere when you know that they're going to start asking who you are, why you are coming, what your reason is for coming, what court case you are here to see. These are all things that create a chilling effect on the public attending a courthouse. More importantly, there's really no connection between requiring all these things and making it safe.

The Minister of Correctional Services and Community Safety mentioned that there is a balancing act going on here between civil liberties and security. There's no balancing act here. When it comes to the courts, you're clearly stripping civil liberties. You're stripping some of the constitutional rights and freedoms that we rely on. One, for example, is the right to be free from arbitrary search and seizure. Now, courts have deemed that entering a courthouse you should be subject to a search, and that's fair. If you're walking into a courthouse, your person, in terms of whether you're carrying any weapons or explosives or chemicals that could cause damage to people—those are some things that we definitely want to keep out of courts, so you are subject to a search. But why would you include in this piece of legislation the ability to have a warrantless search of the vehicle? Their logic behind that is just simply not there.

In addition, the way this law is written you cannot only search the driver of a vehicle; you can search the vehicle in which someone was a passenger. They weren't even driving that car. Warrantless, without any just cause, without any reasonable grounds, you can search the vehicle in which you were a passenger. So someone drops you off, and this law allows them to search that car, the car that you were a passenger in. That's an extreme violation of civil liberties. There is no balancing act going on here. Furthermore, there's really no logical nexus between that infringement of rights and security. I want you to explain to me: How do you think it's improving security in any way to be able to search, without any warrant, the vehicle of the person that dropped me off to court?

I think one of the things that you fail to see is that there are existing powers that the police have. If someone says something that leads them to believe that they might cause harm, if someone is under investigation for potentially committing an offence or having committed an offence or if someone is about to commit an offence, all the same laws, all the same powers that police currently have, still exist. If I walk into a courthouse and I say something that leads the police to believe that I might have some dangerous material in my car or in my friend's car, well, then I've given reasonable grounds. That's what we want to see our society based on. We want to see that these decisions that are made by the police should be backed up by evidence. There should be reasonable grounds for the decisions made.

I just want to focus on the specific areas of concern. These include schedule 2, and under schedule 2, section 138.1(1), further, point 1: “Require a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted or who is on such premises,

- “i. to identify himself or herself, and
- “ii. to provide information for the purpose of assessing whether the person poses a security risk.”

Again, what information are you looking for? Are you going to ask them, “Hey, are you a security risk?” What do you expect the person to say?

All the existing powers of the police still exist. You can still engage in a reasoned, thoughtful investigation if there is some sort of reasonable grounds, if there is some evidence that suggests that there’s a problem. You can still arrest someone based on those reasonable grounds. You still have the right to lawful arrest. So why would you include this provision where you have to provide information to be able to get into a courthouse? How onerous is that?

Furthermore, if you refuse—say they ask me a question, and I don’t want to answer the question. They say, “What’s your political affiliation? Do you support this cause? Are you an environmentalist? Do you believe that there is something wrong with the way this person was arrested?” Maybe I don’t want to answer that because maybe I think, “Yes, the person was wrongfully arrested. I think the state was wrong. I don’t agree with the decision that was made.” Maybe I’m nervous to answer those questions, and I don’t. By not answering those questions, I’m denied entry to the courthouse. That’s a serious infringement on civil liberties. That’s a serious infringement on the principle that a free and democratic society requires open and transparent courts.

Again, I want to draw this analogy. The Public Works Protection Act created a climate in which this government, the Liberal government, put forward regulations which seriously infringed the civil liberties of everyday people in Toronto. In fact, folks who weren’t even protesters, people who were just out and about on the streets of Toronto, were rounded up and kept in steel pens. Everyday folks were impacted in such a serious way. There’s really no remedy. How do you remedy the fact that someone’s liberties were stripped away for three days? Someone has been made to feel like they were sub-human; how do you remedy that?

There has been so much public outcry around what happened in the G20. There have been numerous reports released talking about how horrible that was, how wrong this government was to engage in those activities. Justice McMurtry now released a report about this and spoke about how serious this infringement was and talked about how seriously flawed the Public Works Protection Act was.

In Justice McMurtry’s report, the government is cited that they relied on the support to formulate this bill; they did do a lot of hard work, and you didn’t rely on this bill, because Justice McMurtry simply says in his report how horrible the Public Works Protection Act is—and that was great work—and so you’re repealing it.

1740

In terms of the court security, Justice McMurtry recommends that, yes, we need to have a separate piece of legislation around that. But nowhere in Justice

McMurtry’s recommendations does he say anything about requiring people to identify themselves. Nowhere does he say anything about requiring people to provide information so that they can be assessed in terms of their risk to be able to go into a courthouse. Nowhere in his recommendations does he say that. What Justice McMurtry does say, though, is that people should be subject to a search when entering a courthouse. Well, that’s not in dispute. No one denies that.

I want to make it very clear: There is a huge distinction between your regressive ideology that believes in closed courthouses, that believes in discouraging people from coming to courts, that requires you to identify yourself to come into a public space, that requires you to provide information so that people can assess whether you should be able to go into a court or not—all of these things do not improve safety whatsoever, but what they do is they have a chilling effect, they have a barrier-creating effect, they discourage people from entering a courthouse, which is very contrary to democracy and very contrary to the ideals and principles of the New Democratic Party.

They may be your principles and may be your beliefs, but I guess this is where we draw the clear dichotomy between what you believe in and what we believe in, because we absolutely do not believe in a closed court system. We don’t believe that people have to be subject to providing a reason to enter a public space. No one needs to do that. We certainly don’t believe that people need to identify themselves to be able to enter a courthouse. That’s absolutely not necessary.

In fact, it’s not even what goes on right now. Like I said, in the busiest, most secure courthouses in Canada, which are here in Ontario, they don’t do that. They’re not asking questions like, “Why are you coming to this court? Where are you going to court? What is the court case?” They don’t ask those questions.

In fact, you could actually take some guidance from our party. In Manitoba, they put forward the Court Security Act. Now, this Court Security Act was, in fact, very progressive. It has been tested by the Supreme Court. There were certain elements that were challenged. It has been shown to be constitutional. It has a number of ingredients, a number of elements, which are security-based, security-focused, and do not infringe civil liberties. They’re very specific in the language used in the Manitoba Court Security Act about screening individuals and not searching individuals, because coming into a courthouse shouldn’t be a situation where you’re afraid that your personal information might be searched; your personal documents might be searched; you might be subject to an exhaustive, invasive search.

The purpose of an individual who is providing security at a courthouse is not to search anyone coming in. You want to screen them for any dangerous materials. You want to screen to ensure that the person coming in doesn’t have any serious dangerous weapons, doesn’t have any explosives or any other material that could cause harm to someone. You’re screening for that. We

don't want to allow for an exhaustive and invasive search. We want to ensure that people who are coming in are screened so they don't pose a security threat. That's what the Manitoba security act does. It proposes that. It has none of these elements of requiring someone to identify themselves. The Manitoba security act doesn't require you to provide information for why you're going into the courthouse. It simply says that there are grounds for a screening to ensure that there are no weapons coming in, and that if there are any concerns around that screening, someone could be brought back to the screening area and rescreened to make sure that there are no weapons.

That makes sense. That's a very logical way to ensure that courts are secure and safe, but that at the same time people do not feel that their civil liberties are being taken away; people don't feel discouraged to go to courts.

I just want to highlight the principle of public scrutiny of courts and why open courts are so important. There's a quote from someone leading in the judiciary: "Public scrutiny of the courts is an essential means by which we ensure that judges do justice according to the law, and thereby secure public confidence in the courts and the law." This is by Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, Master of the Rolls for England and Wales. The concept is that public scrutiny, public discourse around the way justice is being done, ensures that the public has confidence in the justice system. Mr. Speaker, that's what we want to ensure. We want to ensure that what goes on in our democracy, whether it's here in Parliament—we make sure our doors here are open because we want people to see that democracy is transparent.

Wherever there's a lack of transparency, people become cynical. People lose their faith, their resolve or their trust in democracy. We don't want to see that happen in our justice system as well. So having an open system, having an open Parliament and having an open courthouse, where the public can come in and view what's going on, ensures that there's a level of public scrutiny. If there's something going in the courts that people don't agree with, they can then raise that issue. People can have a discussion around that issue. People could raise that issue with their parliamentarians, and there could be something done about it. When we lack transparency and when we create barriers to transparency, we are doing an insult and a disservice to democracy.

Just in terms of the history of this bill, I want to highlight some of the things that—the government has recognized their faults or recognized their mistakes, and I wanted to acknowledge that. Initially, the requirement wasn't just to identify oneself; the requirement in the previous iteration of this bill was that you had to provide ID. To get into a courthouse, you had to produce identification. At least the government recognized that that was the wrong way to go. That was definitely not a progressive way to go. Now they're still requiring you to identify yourself, but at least that's one improvement.

There's one element of Bill 35 that we, as the NDP, are very proud of and that I personally feel very proud of.

It's that we fought in the last session to include an accommodation. This accommodation was to require the courts to accommodate people for their creed, for their religion or for their disability. If you want to come to the courthouse, your religious beliefs or expressions should be accommodated and should be respected. If you have a disability, those disabilities should be accommodated, and it should be by law. We're very proud that our amendment was passed in committee and that our amendment made its way into the bill now. That is one positive step forward, that the current version of the bill includes our NDP amendment which requires that the courts accommodate individuals' religious beliefs and disabilities to ensure that our courts are truly open and accessible, that people from all faiths, with all religious expression, with all articles of faith, can enter the courthouse. This is of particular significance for those who wear a yarmulke, for those who wear a hijab, for Sikhs who wear a turban or carry a kirpan. To allow all people, regardless of their faith, the ability to enter a courthouse is absolutely essential for a democracy, absolutely essential for a truly accessible court system. So I'm very proud that that's in here.

The accommodation, as it reads here, is subsection 6: "When a person who is authorized by a board or by the commissioner as described in subsection (1) exercises powers under this section with respect to other persons, he or she shall ensure that those persons are accommodated in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Code, and this includes accommodation in connection with creed or disability."

This is a wonderful amendment. This is something that is certainly a step forward. It's troubling that it didn't exist before. I know a number of people who have been barred from access to the courts, who have not been able to go to their own court dates or who have not been able to fight a traffic ticket in court because they were not able to enter court with their articles of faith. So this is definitely a step forward, and I'm proud that, as part of the NDP, we were able to move this amendment forward.

In the third schedule of this bill, there's nothing really of significance—there is certainly something of significance but nothing that's a significant problem. There are no significant problems with the third section. The third schedule of this bill relates to the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act.

Essentially, when the Public Works and Protection Act is being repealed, it's a law that speaks about the protection that the government is allowed to enforce and regulate with respect to public spaces. Two of those major public spaces—one is courthouses, and the other one is electricity-producing facilities.

There's quite a large distinction between a courthouse and a power plant. In a power plant, we don't have that same level of accessibility required. We don't have that same democratic value where we need our power plants or our electricity generating facilities to be completely accessible. The fact that we have some elements here that

create barriers to access to a power plant, to an electricity generating facility, is not a major concern.

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What is a concern—and I think it's something that I asked the government to look at, and we'll certainly bring it up if this bill goes to committee—is the use of private security guards and the powers that will be extended to those private security guards.

Our peace officers or police officers, or those folks who are given authority by the province, by the state, by the municipalities, have a certain level of responsibility that we have conferred upon them. To confer similar powers to private security officers or private security guards is something that we have to do very carefully. We have to do that in a measured manner. We have to ensure that it doesn't actually result in further infringements of individual rights.

Again, while I'm not raising any specific concerns with schedule 3, I am raising the general concern about the idea of expanding powers to folks who are private security officials.

That's the bill in a nutshell. There are three sections to the bill. Two of them deal with public spaces, one being courthouses, the other being power plants. The first deals with the repeal of the Public Works Protection Act.

Just to turn to that Public Works Protection Act, it speaks to a larger problem, and some of my colleagues have brought this issue up. The way our current Parliament works, in every law, there's a great deal that's left in regulation. While we can debate the legislation here in Parliament, while in committee we talk about the legislation—and if there's a change that needs to be made to the legislation, it's brought here into the House. We debate it and we discuss it. These issues then make their way into the public.

The problem with regulation-making powers is that regulations can be made and changed at the whim of the ministry and the minister. What that does is, it obscures what's going on. It makes it less clear. It makes it less open to public scrutiny. What happens often is some of the most serious infringements or serious scandals flow from this problem. When the ministry or the minister makes regulatory or regulation changes without public scrutiny, that's where we see some serious problems happen. In fact, many of the problems that we've seen over the past decade at least, if not longer—many of those scandals, many of those issues, many of those problems could have been avoided if there was public scrutiny with the changes. But there's not, because the regulation-making authority that the ministries and the ministers have makes it more difficult for the public to have scrutiny over what's going on.

With respect to G20, I think it's very important that we highlight the significance of G20, in that G20 was a very distinct and very—it's a point in our history that's going to stand out, and it's going to stand out for all the wrong reasons. We have to make sure that we improve upon the past. We have to make sure that we lay blame appropriately, that the people who actually made the

mistake are held accountable so that in the future those mistakes don't happen. The first step is to acknowledge there was a mistake made; the second part of that is to make sure that we know who made the mistake. Who was responsible for it? Who do we hold accountable so it doesn't happen again?

Now, the Liberal government will say that Prime Minister Harper should not have held G20 in Toronto. There is some merit to that argument; I accept that. There was a lack of thoughtfulness in determining where this would be held. But once it was decided that it was going to be in Toronto, much of the responsibility in terms of security falls at the feet of the Liberal government.

The location, again, was decided by the federal government, but once it was decided, it was this government that made decisions about how that security would unfold, and one of those major decisions that was made was in relation to the Public Works Protection Act. It was this government that chose to use this act. It chose to change regulations, essentially, in secret, with really no public discourse. There were some postings about the changes that were made, but they weren't in any manner that the public at large knew about. The media wasn't able to cover it in any significant way. People didn't know about their rights, and they didn't know that the changes you made resulted in people just going to work, people just walking the streets being arrested, people being searched, people being detained, over a thousand people being kept in metal pens. These violations occurred under your government and by your government. I think that's important, and you have to take responsibility for that.

Much of the criticism about the Public Works Protection Act was the fact that it was too broad, that it conferred too many rights upon the individuals who were responsible for our security, namely the police in this case, and the police were responsible for some serious violations of civil liberties.

Now, one of the things I've learned in life is that if you make a mistake, you've made one mistake, but if you make a mistake and don't fix it, you've just made two mistakes. You have an opportunity now to correct the mistake by repealing the Public Works Protection Act. Don't make another mistake by not looking at it and making sure that this bill doesn't infringe on civil liberties. Don't make a second mistake by replacing one bad piece of legislation with another bad piece of legislation. While there's at least one element that I'm very honoured and proud of in this schedule 2 that will allow for accommodations, I'm very troubled, again, with these requirements that will infringe significantly on individual civil liberties.

The effect of this is broader than just one person. When you create a culture, when you create this barrier, this sentiment where it's difficult or you create an atmosphere where it's difficult to go to a courthouse, it's not just impeding the individual civil liberty, it's creating a shift where the public is no longer welcome in the courthouse. It's creating a shift where the public no longer has the same ability to provide scrutiny over what

goes on in the courthouse and, in effect, it actually works towards eroding the public trust or faith in the administration of justice. In a society where you rely on the rule of law, it's important that the public feels that the rule of law is something that it has faith in, that it has trust in, that it actually believes delivers justice.

If we look at what's happening in the States, if we look at what's happening with Ferguson currently, where the public feels that there is no justice, the public feels that there is such a great level of unfairness going on in their communities, people are absolutely losing their faith in the justice system. A lot of what we can do to re-instill that belief and that faith in the justice system is in making sure it's truly open and transparent.

People always fear what they don't know, people always distrust what they can't understand. The more we understand what goes on in our courts, the more the public understands, the more the public can see it, the more they can have trust in it, the more they can actually believe it works. And actually, more important than just trusting it blindly, the public can go to the courts and see what's wrong with it, and if there's something with it, they can bring those issues up. Public scrutiny in a lot of ways is better than some of the professionals who do this for a living every day. Sometimes we become blinded to what's actually going on, and if we see that something has been done for so long in a certain way, we think it's the only way. Sometimes having someone who doesn't see this every day, someone who doesn't do this for a living—they can actually come in and provide a fresh new insight and say, "Listen, why is it that the courts work in this manner? Why is it that the trial happens this way? This doesn't make sense. This doesn't seem fair."

Sometimes those insights actually do a lot towards progressing democracy. Sometimes those insights can do

a lot towards improving democracy; in fact, they can improve the justice system. That's why it is so fundamentally important that we maintain a culture where courts are accessible.

I'll tell you a quick story. The way I got into criminal defence was as a student, I used to go to the courthouse and watch trials. I sat in on a trial and I saw what was going on, and I saw a lawyer by the name of Richard O'Brien cross-examining a police officer on the stand. When I watched him cross-examine that police officer, challenging why he had arrested and detained a young black male, I saw an opportunity to actually be a part of creating some level of justice, some way of being a check and balance to the power of the police—that in some circumstances, when people overstep or misuse their powers, there was a check and balance to that. Much like the opposition acts as a check and balance to the government, I saw that there was a potential to be a check and balance to the inappropriate use of powers in the courts.

The fact that I was able to go to court openly—I walked in and was able to sit down and listen to what was going on—helped me to decide my future career. That's one of my personal reasons why I think it's so important for us to instill open and transparent courts as a part of our democracy.

I notice that it's now pretty close to 6 o'clock and I think that I shall wrap up now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Peter Tabuns
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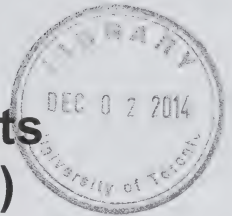
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Wednesday 26 November 2014

Mercredi 26 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 26 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 26 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, December 4, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 7:

- notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

- witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

- each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

- the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the day of public hearings; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be noon on Friday, December 5, 2014, and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, December 8, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Monday, December 8, 2014, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and

any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, December 9, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Bradley has moved notice of motion 10. Mr. Bradley.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm very pleased to participate in this important debate, and I look forward to hearing from my honourable colleagues of all parties. It is my hope that all members will support this motion for Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act. I suspect that in their heart of hearts, though those in the opposition will rail against it—as I'm told, some members who sit on this side used to rail against such motions; I'm informed that used to be the case—I am convinced that members of the opposition, secretly and in their heart of hearts, are pleased to see a time allocation motion of this kind, because they then have the opportunity to rail on against the government about a time allocation motion while secretly wanting to have everything processed by the appropriate time so they can be in their own constituencies and with their families by Christmas.

This is an extremely important piece of legislation and one that the House needs to pass. It is about ensuring our economic recovery and continued economic growth since the global recession. It is part of our government's economic plan, which is focused on sustained job creation

and building stronger partnerships right across the economy. It is about providing faster, smarter and more streamlined government services to our businesses. It is about reducing the unnecessary regulatory, administrative and compliance burden.

Since the recession lows in 2009, Ontario has, in fact, created more than 550,000 jobs, and we continue to outpace the United States in job creation since then. But more is needed to be done to help businesses and clusters, large and small, to continue to grow in Ontario. Ultimately, this bill will help keep governments transparent and responsible when it comes to burden reduction, and will help to foster stronger clusters across Ontario.

This legislation would require annual reports on how much red tape has been reduced for business. We are setting a goal of saving companies here in Ontario \$100 million in paperwork costs over three years. If passed, Ontario would join British Columbia and Saskatchewan as the only provinces with legislation around regulatory reform, and it would be the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate cluster development.

Since 2008, Ontario has eliminated 17% of all regulatory requirements, totalling 80,000 regulatory burdens. We have seen support for Bill 7 from key stakeholders like the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

Ian Howcroft, vice-president of CME Ontario, stated, "Bill 7 will establish the reporting framework necessary to drive results in this area. The legislation also sends a strong signal to investors that the government is prepared to support industry driven cluster development where appropriate. We applaud this step in the right direction."

0910

Mr. Speaker, what's more is that we know that there is some support from members of all parties represented in this Legislature. In fact, members from both opposition parties have made positive comments about this bill. The member for Oshawa stated yesterday, "Government needs to support the development of our regional clusters, needs to listen to key stakeholders," and that "sounds like a step in the right direction."

The member for Halton Hills—an esteemed member of this Legislature—said the following: "Of course we know that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been involved in the drafting of the legislation and has encouraged the government to do this. Again, I want to acknowledge that." That is, of course, from one of my favourite members of the House, the member for Halton Hills.

Here we have opposition members acknowledging that our government should and did listen to our key stakeholders in the drafting and development of this bill.

We need to take action now to keep our economy on the right track and make sure our government and future governments are transparent when it comes to burden reduction and ensure clusters get the support they need.

It is time to move forward on this bill. In the last Parliament, this Legislature was ground to a halt and was unable to move forward on important pieces of legislation such as this piece of legislation. Only 39% of gov-

ernment bills were passed in the last minority Parliament. That's compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990.

Voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June: They didn't want any more of the stalling of the Legislature by the opposition parties.

I urge all members of the House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

As you would be aware, Mr. Speaker, as a distinguished member of this Legislative Assembly of Ontario, governments would prefer to see these matters proceed by negotiation. No government, I am sure, wishes to have a time allocation motion as one of its instruments, but it becomes clear after a while in the meetings that take place between the various members of the House that the bills are not going to proceed in a reasonable fashion. As I stated earlier on in my remarks, I'm aware—because I sat in opposition for a number of years—that there are many days when the opposition actually hopes that the government will bring forward a time allocation motion.

I can recall in a previous Parliament when one opposition member, whose name will not be revealed in the House today, actually came to me asking for a time allocation motion. This individual came over and said, "Do you have a time allocation motion ready for this particular piece of legislation?" I said, "I have six possible choices, and I would even entertain having you suggest which one would be brought forward." I indicated to the member at that time as well, I said, "Well, of course, you're asking for this, but were I to introduce such a time allocation motion, you'll be there to denounce it and say that the government was ramming through" whatever piece of legislation it happened to be at that particular time. I acknowledged, of course, that, and that individual acknowledged that.

There is some—not all—there is some gamesmanship that takes place in the Legislative Assembly. I know that will shock you, Mr. Speaker: that from time to time there is gamesmanship on the part of the opposition. Once again, I must confess, having been a member of the opposition, I have engaged in the kind of activities that the opposition is engaged in when we deal with motions of this kind. I am never critical of them for that, because I know that they have a role and responsibility, even though I know, again, as I look at my very good friend the member from Barry's Bay, that in his heart of hearts he is probably absolutely delighted to have this motion come forward so he will have an opportunity to get back to his constituency at an appropriate time, just before Christmas, and be able to entertain them with his wonderful musical talents, which I am told include a melodious voice that is widely regarded by the people in the Ottawa Valley.

And so I'm pleased to be able to put this motion forward. I wish I didn't have to, of course, but we have been unable to come to an agreement. I know that my friends in the opposition are eager to conclude this session in an orderly and reasonable fashion and get back to their constituencies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the deputising House leader.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back in the day, there was a television show; I'm not sure if I remember the name of it exactly. It was something like "What's My Line?" or "Whose Line Is It?" In it there would be three people behind the panel, and they would be asked questions like: "Do you believe in time allocation?"

One person might say, "Yes. Time allocation is a tool that is absolutely necessary for the government to move ahead with its agenda in an expeditious fashion and not allow the opposition to tie up the Legislature."

Another person might say, "Time allocation is an affront to democracy. It chokes off reasonable debate and prevents the government from having the greatest amount of good, solid, positive input to a piece of legislation, so that, at the end of the day, the people of Ontario are gifted with a bill that best represents the government's attempt to fulfill the needs they've been calling for."

That would go back and forth, and they would be asking questions like, "Would you ever consider proposing time allocation yourself?"

One might say, "Oh, never. Never. Because I am the one who believes that time allocation is an affront to democracy."

The other person might say, "Well, I'm somewhat ambivalent on it."

And a third might say, "Oh, yes, we would do that if necessary."

At the end of all those questions, the panelists would then have to choose: Is it person number one, person number two or number three? Then the host would end that segment by saying, "Would the real Jim Bradley please stand up?" That's how he would end that portion. Then Jim Bradley would come forward to introduce himself to the panel.

Unfortunately, on that show—that was a very special show—all three of them came down. All three of them came down, because they couldn't figure out which one was the real Jim Bradley: the Jim Bradley who was against time allocation because it was an affront to democracy, or the Jim Bradley who believed in time allocation.

Now, just by coincidence, the member for St. Catharines happens to enjoy that same name. I mean, there is more than one Jim Bradley in the world, as you would know. I mean, there are more Jim Bradleys, for example, than there are John Yakabuskis; Bradley is just a more common name than Yakabuski.

But that's how that segment ended. They couldn't really figure out who the real Jim Bradley was. As a matter of fact, I think that was the last show they ever had. It went off the air after that, because they lost their shtick: The panelists were stumped for the first time ever. The show couldn't even determine who the real person was.

I just want to touch on that, because it brings me to what is happening in this Legislature. It's kind of like

that show. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville pointed out so ably the other day how the member for St. Catharines, who happens to enjoy that same name, spoke in this Legislature on so many occasions about how wrong it was for not only the Rae government back on November 24, 1993, to bring in time allocation, but again in 2001—I don't have the exact date, but I believe it was in November as well—when the Harris government brought in time allocation, and he railed.

0920

Hon. James J. Bradley: It was wrong then.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, and the member for St. Catharines says, "It was wrong then." I guess the definition of sin changes when the Liberals become government. What was a sin yesterday is now some kind of a benevolent act on the part of a government that just knows what's best. I don't think the world quite works that way.

Yesterday, I was under the impression that I was coming into this Legislature this morning to speak on Bill 7, that vacuous bill that really does nothing, that the government is putting out as a piece of legislation that is somehow going to reduce the burden on business and reduce the amount of red tape in government. Well, no government in history has created more red tape than this government. Every time you turn around, they're passing a bill that makes it harder to do business.

This bill was purportedly going to reduce the amount of tape, but it never said anything about actually reducing red tape. It said that every year they were going to have to put out a report on how many burdens they eased. I'll tell you, when you've got the spin doctors employed that the Liberal government has employed, you can try to make black look white or, as they say, you can sell ice to an Eskimo, because they're going to spin it in such a way that they're going to put the best possible outlook on it, when it actually accomplished nothing. But there will be a nice report, and some bureaucrat—who might have a new office in MaRS by that time—is going to be well paid to produce that report.

I just want to tell you what I went through last night, because I had a dream. You remember Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*? You know Ebenezer Scrooge? I had a dream, and it was a little different. Ebenezer Scrooge was a mean-spirited guy who was very uncharitable, and had lots of money and just ignored the plight of those who were less powerful under him, poor, and didn't have the ability to actually do things on their own. They relied, to some degree, on the benevolence of those who were above them. We kind of feel like that as an opposition in this majority, because the government, while it has all the power now, is failing to exercise the judgment that is required, and that is to have the benevolence to treat that opposition with a little more respect.

In the dream, the characters—you can't really control what goes on in a dream. In the dream, there was a character called Yasir Scrooge—

Laughter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, Yasir Scrooge.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And Tiny Jim? Was there Tiny Jim?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, there was no Tiny Jim—sorry, it was Tiny Jim, and Tiny Jim came from eastern Ontario, in the Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry area. Tiny Jim’s dad was not Bob Cratchit but John Yakit.

This Yasir Scrooge had the opportunity to give a little bit to Yakit and Tiny Jim, and maybe give in a little bit and try to be charitable, because we’re in the Christmas season. He had a dream himself; there was a dream within a dream. Yasir Scrooge was visited by this ghost of time allocation past. The appearance of the ghost looked a lot like the member from St. Catharines when he was a little bit younger. He was hovering over Yasir Scrooge and saying, “You shouldn’t do time allocation. You should be kinder to the opposition. They’re good people. Think of Tiny Jim. Think of Johnny Yakit.”

In A Christmas Carol, at the end of the day, Scrooge broke down. Scrooge actually was kind; he found a heart, and inside he repented for all of the meanness that he had displayed over all those years. He was almost excessive in his generosity to try to make up for what had gone on.

Unfortunately, I woke up this morning and that dream was a reality, but Scrooge did not change. This morning, I came into the House, and the Liberals went ahead with this time allocation. They went ahead one more time. It’s like Yogi Berra says: “Déjà vu all over again.” We thought we might have seen the end of it, that we just might have seen the last cut, the last dagger, that maybe the government has thought, “Advent is just around the corner. Maybe in the spirit of Christmas, we are going to lighten up a little bit on the opposition and say, ‘We’re not going to time allocate this bill.’” I see no reason why we couldn’t reach an agreement on a bill like this.

We don’t think the bill does very much. But for this government, it is the best attempt you’re going to get at the reduction of red tape. You’re not going to get something that—when we were in government, we put numbers on it: “Red tape must be reduced by this amount. Each ministry must do this amount of work to ensure that red tape is reduced.” This one here is, “We’re going to write a report.” That sounds like more red tape: “We’re going to write a report about what we did or didn’t accomplish.” Let me assure you, at the end of the day, they might as well put that on red paper, because it will be more red tape.

We weren’t going to stand in the way of the legislation, because anything positive at all from this Liberal government that might make it a little easier to conduct business in the province of Ontario, we were going to be in favour of. We never indicated we were going to be challenging this bill. It’s not going to accomplish very much. Let’s just move it through. But why, why, when you could have negotiated with the opposition and said, “What can we do on this one? Is there something we can give you in return?”—just a little crumb off of Scrooge’s table. Maybe we could have avoided this whole thing where Tiny Jim and I are going to be talking to this, each party spending 40 minutes of the House’s time. Well, the

government, as you see, won’t speak for 40 minutes, because I know that, deep down, they’re not feeling good about this. They’re not feeling good about it.

For those out there, the millions who are watching on TV this morning—I want to get the Nielsen ratings for this next week. But for those people who are watching, they know that the deputy House leader from St. Catharines didn’t make this decision on his own. He’s a loyal soldier, and he has been here since—hell, before there were organized armies. He may have been the first recruit. But he gets his orders from that place down the hall, the same floor we’re on, down the hall. Corner office, windows overlooking University Avenue, the best seat in the House: That’s where the decisions are made.

Would it not just make a whole lot more sense—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: She can see MaRS from her window.

Mr. John Yakabuski: She can see MaRS from her window, yes; there’s no question about it. There should be this little dial built on to the window, where every second you see the clock turning, that’s how much MaRS is costing the people of Ontario, unoccupied. “No life on MaRS, no life in MaRS”; that should be the slogan. So they’re looking over there, wondering when there might be an occupant, when there might be inhabitants of MaRS.

I don’t fault the deputy House leader on this entirely. But I do believe that there was a better way. There is a better way.

I’m not going to stand here and say that governments of the past didn’t use time allocation, and perhaps excessively. I was never a member of those governments. But at the same time, you cannot, in good conscience, rail against the actions of a previous government and say they were wrong, and then do exactly the same thing and say it’s right.

0930

I mean, wrong is wrong and right is right. I realize we don’t live in a black-and-white world; there is some greyness there. From time to time, it’s hard to differentiate; I accept that. But on something as clear as, “Do we institute time allocation or do we not?” or “Is there a better way?”—is there a way for the people to sit down and say, “Look, we’re going to be here in these circumstances for the foreseeable future?”

I have no choice but to accept the verdict of the people of June 12. They elected the Liberals to a majority. We’re the minority. But in a world where the people—the advantaged—want to truly be respected, they treat the disadvantaged with the commensurate amount of respect. They sit down with those people and say, “We realize we have the power to do just about anything we want, under our parliamentary system. But that’s not the way our forefathers intended it to work.” Our forefathers intended that reasonable people on both sides of an argument will sit down and try to find a way past this, so that we can work in a more cohesive, co-operative—adversarial, yes, because we are different parties with different philosophical beliefs and different ideologies about how govern-

ment should work and what may or may not be best for the people of Ontario.

But that doesn't mean that it should be a one-man show in this Legislature. It means that the government—that owl and the eagle, I got them mixed up. You see, time allocation can be so confusing at times that it even mixed me up.

I'll tell you what I didn't mix up: I didn't mix up that dream.

The owl and the eagle: The owl is looking at them, imploring them to be wise in their decisions. The eagle is looking at us, imploring us to have our eyes wide open and to be the proper watchdogs of the government. That's what we're supposed to do. But I think that in order for that to work best, we need to work together more.

We will do our part in holding the feet of the government to the fire. We will do our part in ensuring that this government is accountable. But we also recognize that our tools are limited. Our tool box has been shrunk. We're going to respect that too. We want to respect that.

But on the other side of the equation, I think it is absolutely reasonable to expect that the government will do a whole lot more talking to us about what way we see forward, getting through these pieces of legislation. Most of them are not overly contentious, but there were a few; there were a couple that we really did want to have some province-wide hearings on, to travel throughout the province, to get the feedback from the people—the real people.

I'm not saying the 107 people who sit in this Legislature aren't real people, because we are. The only difference between any one of us and the constituents we represent is the job we do. Part of how we get elected is because people believe that we are most representative of them in our home ridings. I give all the credit in the world to every member on all sides of the House for being elected. I give them credit for seeking office, because I think it's a noble pursuit, and I think we all come here for the right objectives. But I think we do get a little tainted sometimes on the partisan side of the argument.

I would hope, as we move forward, that the government consider some things of what I said today. They can even think of the dream. But more importantly, I want them to think of what I'm saying, which is that I think it's time to slow down the time allocation snowball that is running wild down the hill. It has picked up so much snow now, you'd think it went through Buffalo. I mean, it's just getting bigger and bigger, and we're getting run over by it.

We want to act as a responsible opposition. I know I speak for my colleague in the third party when I say that. We want to be a responsible opposition, but you've got to give us that chance.

I want you to really think about what you're doing here and reconsider how you're using the standing orders and the tool of time allocation to, in the words of my honourable colleague, choke off debate in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have to say, I'm not happy to yet again be part of a debate about time allocation. I think this is number four or five in time allocation motions that the government has brought forward, and they still intend to bring others.

I want to split my speech into two parts: I want to talk about time allocation and I also want to talk a little bit about the bill.

On the time allocation part, what members who just got here don't realize is that time allocation makes this place not function. If you're a government member, you're sitting there and you say, "I've been told we can get our agenda through, and that's great and that's wonderful. We won the election—nah-nah-nah nah-nah—and we can do what we want."

The reality: Time allocation makes this place fail. It does not lend itself to what this Parliament is supposed to be all about. The basic idea of the Parliament is simply this: The government always gets to propose and the government always gets its legislation. The executive always should, at the end of the day, be able to do what it has to do. But on the flip side, the opposition has a very important role to play in the Parliament in looking at what the government is proposing, pointing out any criticisms, if any are needed, pointing out changes, if they need to be done, and saying sometimes, if you've done something right, that you've done it right. That is what the process of Parliament is all about.

The other part is that, at the end, if you have time allocation, what you're really doing is limiting the ability for the public to participate at the committee level, to have their say when it comes to the particular bill at hand. When the government brings over time allocation into a debate such as this, as this government has been doing, I really believe it destroys what Parliament should be all about. Parliament should be a place where you have some thoughtful debate on public issues; where the public has an opportunity, at the committee level, to come and to present to committee; and where committees, yes, in some cases, should travel so that people across this province who are affected by various pieces of legislation have a chance to have their say.

If the government didn't use time allocation, does that mean that the opposition would force every bill to travel through the province? Absolutely not. There are some bills that don't need to be travelled.

Let me tell you how it used to work here. Mr. Bradley, the member from St. Catharines-whatever; I don't know the name of the riding. Sorry, Speaker.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's just St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. He remembers well because he was here when no time allocation existed, as I was when I was first elected. There was no time allocation in this Legislature. It was a foreign concept. The government had to work with the opposition to move its agenda forward.

As the member from St. Catharines pointed out, when time allocation was brought into our standing orders by the NDP government—which I think was a mistake. He

pointed out that the difficulty now is that there is not a bill that will go to third reading that doesn't get full debate. In the days prior to time allocation, as the member from St. Catharines will remember, you hardly ever had a debate at third reading. Why? Because House leaders used to sit down and say, "All right. I'm the government House leader. I have an agenda, and it's 10 or 15 bills that I would like to get done in this session or during this calendar year." And the opposition would say, "Okay, that's fine. Here are some bills that we think are important to our stakeholders and the people we represent. We would like to have a little bit of additional time at second reading on this bill. We want a little bit more time in committee on that bill. We would like to travel this bill so that we're able to do public hearings." There was that trade-off. The government got its agenda at the end of the day.

There are a whole bunch of bills that really never got a lot of debate and got no time at third reading and got very little time in committee. I would argue that this would probably be one such bill, because this particular bill, which I'll talk to later and I know the member from London Centre—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: West.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: London West. She would like to speak to this later as well, and she'll talk more substantively to the bill.

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The bill doesn't do a heck of a lot, so it's not as if we have to travel this bill across the province. But by using time allocation, what you're essentially doing is you're telling the opposition, "Forget it. We, the government of transparency—I, the Premier the Ontario, who say that I want to have a dialogue with people, I want to have a discussion with the people of Ontario and I want to have a transparent government, say, 'Pull the curtain over the Legislature. We're time-allocating everything.'"

It is not only contrary to what the Premier promised in the election and not only contrary to what the Premier said after she was elected; it totally destroys what Parliament is supposed to be about. Parliament is about thoughtful debate; it's about listening to both sides of an argument, hearing what the public has to say, and then us working together and amending legislation so that it actually becomes better legislation through the process.

But time allocation takes all that away. Time allocation, in the end, will say to the opposition, "You know what? Talk out every bill at second reading, because it's the only chance you're ever going to have to speak to this bill." So every bill gets six and a half hours. Then you bring a time allocation motion, and every time allocation motion will be spoken to at maximum by the opposition parties, and whatever time we get at third reading, we're going to take that too. But tell me what that does for the process of making legislation and creating better legislation.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What was that? I didn't hear you; sorry.

Interjection: It's efficient.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's efficient. See, that's the problem. That is the problem. Government members and new members who come into this place think it's efficient. So we're in real trouble here, because I don't think the members understand what this really means.

What it means is that Parliament doesn't work. Parliament is by fiat, and it's the government deciding not only what the agenda is—which is their right. I never argue that the government shouldn't have the right to decide the agenda. That's why they got a majority government. That's why they're the executive. They have the right to set the agenda. And you know what, members? You also have the right to have your legislation passed, absolutely. I don't argue otherwise.

But you have a responsibility as government to not necessarily be efficient, as the member from the government side says—I think efficiency is a good thing in itself, but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater here. And some are pretty big babies. If you look at me, there's a lot of bathwater around me, but that's a whole other story.

The point is that it is not efficient, because what it does is it takes away what this Parliament is all about. I'm going to use this one example.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's arrogant.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is arrogant. The member from Windsor—Tecumseh—is it Windsor—Tecumseh? Yes. I'm learning these ridings; I'm getting pretty good. The member from Windsor—Tecumseh says it's arrogant, and I agree.

I know that the member, in his heart of hearts, Tiny Jim from St. Catharines, as he was coined by my good friend the whip from the Conservative Party, from—Renfrew-Nipissing?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Pembroke. I'm going to get it one of these days.

He made some fun of that, but he knows in his heart of hearts that what I say is true, because he remembers that when he came into this place, it used to be that House leaders used to work this stuff out.

Let me give you an example of how this is bad for legislation.

The government, under a former Liberal Minister of Natural Resources—who I will not name, because she's no longer a minister and a member of this House—had introduced a bill having to do with something at MNR about the first term of the McGuinty government.

They brought the bill into committee and they time-allocated it. So we had very little time, first of all, to have public hearings on the bill, and we had hardly any time to deal with clause-by-clause.

For those people watching and saying, "What is clause-by-clause?", that's the time that we take to amend bills. So if you have a limited time for clause-by-clause, the time allocation motion in effect says, "Talk about the amendments, and when you run out of time, all of the amendments die and the government just gets its way." So if the public has something in section 28 of the bill,

and you've only got up to section 5 because you only had a day to deal with clause-by-clause, too bad. All of those suggestions that we heard from the public about every section after section 5 are lost.

I'll give you an example of what happened. The government brought a bill forward, and they said in the particular bill that they wanted a certain thing to happen. So they said, "This section of the bill clearly spells out that this thing shall happen." I'm reading the bill, and somebody came to committee and pointed it out and said, "Hey, I don't like this bill but, God, if you read this section, it doesn't do what the government purports. It does the opposite." So I questioned the person who was presenting, and I was kind of interested, so once we got to clause-by-clause—I had made notes on that schedule of the bill in that particular section—I raised the issue and proposed an amendment that would actually fix the problem. The government was going to vote against my amendment that was going to fix their bill to do what it is they wanted to do. I was just doing my job as a legislator.

The government said, "No, no, we're not voting for your amendment." I said, "Why?" They said, "Because you're wrong." I said, "Hang on a second. Let's call legislative counsel." So I asked the lawyer who sits at committee, who is paid by this assembly, "Can you tell me if this section does what it is the government wants?" He said, "No, it does the opposite." The government still argued that neither was I right, nor was the public right, but that even the lawyer was wrong.

I then called the ministry lawyer—the person who was responsible for the ministry at this particular clause-by-clause section—before the committee in order to comment on the clause-by-clause. They have to tell the truth because when you appear before committee it's just like a court of law. If you lie, and you can be found in contempt; we can put you in jail if we wanted to. We have that power. People don't know that.

What ended up happening was, the lawyer for the ministry said, "Yes, you're right. This section of the bill does completely opposite to what the government wants. You are right." The minister at the time said, "Hang on. I'll take a look at it; I'll bring it back to the Premier and I'll look at it if we can get this fixed." The next day she came back to me and said, "No, Gilles, the section is staying the way it is." She said, "I argued with the Premier that we should change it, because it does opposite to what we want, but the Premier said that if we do that it will show that we're weak and that we got it wrong in the first place so just leave it the way it is."

We are now living with an act that is flawed and that we now have to pay the price for when it comes to development in northern Ontario having to do with natural resources. You will hear about that a little bit later.

Those changes, that you should have done to the bill that would have fixed the bill to do what it is that you want, weren't done, and now we have a flawed bill that developers are having a real problem with in the mining sector and in forestry—and anybody else who comes in contact with the bush is having a real problem with—because the MNR is having a problem trying to figure

out how to permit things because, quite frankly, the legislation was flawed, the regulation is very confusing and they don't know how to deal with it.

Whose interest did you serve by time-allocating the bill? Did you serve the public interest? Absolutely not. We're losing investment in this province because of bad legislation. I will bring those cases before this Legislature in due time.

Was the government the winner? Yes, the government, in that case, thinks it's the winner, but the reality is, we all lost, because those are economic activities that we're not going to get in this province, where you would have revenue from taxation that could go to pay for things like high schools, subways, health care and other things.

Time allocation in itself is not a process that is as efficient, as government members would say; it is a process that makes flawed legislation.

So I'm not happy—normally we start our debates by saying, "I'm happy to participate in this debate." I've got to tell you, I'm not very happy about participating in this debate, because the government is time-allocating everything through this House.

The second point I want to make on time allocation is that the government, when they got elected, came to the opposition House leaders and said to us, "We are interested in finding a way that we can work together in order to get our agenda through the House." The government said, "We have four bills; these are our priorities." Never mind that the four bills have now become seven or eight, which I think is negotiation in bad faith. If I go into bargaining, either in a collective agreement scenario or a business deal, and I say, "This is how much I want for this," and then you go away, Speaker, and you say, "You know what? I'm going to give him an offer based on what it is that he's asking," and all of a sudden I come back and say, "Oh, the price is jacked up now"—that's bad faith. That's just bad business practice.

That's what the government did to the opposition House leaders at the beginning of the session. They came to us and said, "In the spirit of transparency and doing things different and being an open government, Premier Wynne wants to find a way that we can work together. Can you pass my four bills?" We said, "Of course we'll pass your four bills, but we would like to travel this bill a little bit more than that bill," and do the kinds of things that normally happen at House leaders'. The government essentially walked away. I think they never had the intention of really having a compromise on any of this. They just wanted us to be part of passing their agenda without having any kind of scrutiny, and are now time-allocating absolutely everything that moves. I just say to the government across the way, you're not doing yourselves and you're not doing Ontarians any kind of favour by time-allocating these bills.

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The last thing I want to say in the 20 minutes that I want to leave for my colleague the member from London—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: West.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—West, are comments on the bill itself. If this bill was something that was so earth-shattering and great and wonderful, and it was so important to the economy, I'm sure that the opposition and the government can come to an agreement about how to pass this bill in a timely manner in order to help our economy and, I would suggest, probably make a better bill. The reality is this bill doesn't do that.

The bill does two things which the government already has the power to do. This is the thing that's really weird. Everything in this bill, the two schedules, the government already has the authority to do. In other words, they don't need this legislation to do what they purport to want to do in this bill, because they already delegated all those responsibilities to cabinet a long time ago.

The first thing the bill says is that cabinet wants the ability, through the various ministers, to make a report annually about what they're doing in order to reduce the burden—and that means red tape—on businesses in Ontario, and to report it in a prescribed manner so that they're able to report to Ontarians what they've done to reduce the burden. Not a bad idea. I think I can vote for that. I think the members from Timiskaming and Windsor—Tecumseh can vote for that. It's not a bad idea. The public should have the right to know what the government is doing.

Do they need legislation to make it happen? Absolutely not. They've already got the authority to do it. The government could do this today. They could have done it yesterday. They could have done it 11 years ago when they were elected. They don't need legislation to do that—to write a report? We're time-allocating a bill so you can write a report, which you already have the authority to do? It sounds to me like you're filibustering your own Legislature. That's what it sounds like to me.

The second part of the bill, the second schedule, which is really sort of the meat of the whole bill: They came to the conclusion that there are sectors in our economy. You know what? The member from Windsor—Tecumseh didn't know there was an auto sector in Ontario. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane didn't know there was an agricultural sector in Ontario. I didn't know there was a mining sector or a forestry sector in Ontario. Oh, my God. I bet you didn't know that there were other sectors in the economy either.

What this bill does is, it says, "We recognize by way of law that the government has the right to make regulations per sector and to draft a plan about how to help those sectors do better in this economy." What legislation do you need to do that? Do you not think that the government could draft its own policies about which sectors they want to invest in and why, and what they can do to make the economy grow stronger in certain sectors of the economy?

They use another language. They call them clusters. "Clusters" make me think of something else, and I am not going there.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I'm not going to say that word.

The point is the government is passing legislation to essentially do what they have the right to do already, which is to say, "We recognize that the economy is both sectoral and geographic and that there should be some sort of plan to help those sectors in those certain geographic locations to do better." Do we need to use legislative time for the government to do that? Absolutely not. This government has drafted a bill with two schedules that they don't need because they already have the authority to do that. Ask yourself the question, "Why are they doing this?" It's a communications exercise, pure and simple.

This is the problem—and I'm going to end, in the two minutes that I've got, on this point. There used to be a time when governments and opposition and the media—and I say the media for a reason—used to look at things on a more long-term basis. They would look at a particular problem in Ontario—in this case it could have been sectors of the economy, around automobiles or whatever it might be—and they would look at it and work at it and try to develop a plan over a period of time that actually was functional and got you results in the end. That's not what governments do now.

Governments operate by headline. The government needed a bill that reinforces their communication strategy that they're doing something about the economy. They said, "What can we do that's not going to cost us any money, that doesn't really mean anything, so we can say to Ontarians we're doing something?" That's essentially what this bill does. The government has got a communications exercise through this bill to make it appear as if they're doing something about the economy. Are they doing something about the economy? Go talk to the people at Cliffs. Go talk to the people in the mining sector or in the Ring of Fire. You'll find out they're not doing a heck of a lot. So much for sectoral clusters. There's a cluster that kind of collapsed.

The point is, the government now governs not by developing good, solid policy on issues. Rather, what the government does is, they find issues like this that they can sell to reinforce their brand that they can sell to the media and say, "Look at what we're doing." This is nothing more than a communications strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I know government members are going to want to speak to this time allocation motion because they have very strong feelings. I look forward to hearing what the government members have to say about time allocation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I thought I'd be talking about Bill 7, but I can see that the government is now putting time allocation on it, I guess to limit debate on a bill, as the member from the third party clearly states, they don't need. They have the rights.

You have to really wonder, first of all, what the bill is here for. People in my riding certainly have been talking about the amount of red tape and the need to get rid of it, but it's not something we've heard from the other side.

We've heard for years how the government had to look after everybody, they had to put more and more rules in place. Then, every once in a while, they come back and talk about how they're going to help small business by getting out of their way.

I remember, last term, they had a bill where they were going to reduce it. The member on our side stood up and asked them if they'd stop doing such a good job, because they went from regulations that were about 2,000 pages to 3,600 pages. That's their attitude of doing a good job of reducing regulation. They were almost doubling it in the time they were in government. The only good thing about this bill is that it maybe stops them from introducing another bill that may be more damaging to the economy.

I was talking to a constituent in my riding just yesterday about the new regulations coming down in the Cemeteries Act. There are two small cemeteries they look after, one in Martintown that dates back to the late 1700s, a very old graveyard that's essentially full. There are a couple of spots left. They also look after the cemetery in North Branch. He says he's one of the younger members on the committee. He's about 71 years old. It's hard to get people to look after it. Now they come out with a real epistle where they have to fill in numerous pages wanting to know if they've ever lost a licence, all this detail. Of course, many of the people are getting up close to their nineties and they're a little worried about filling in documentation like this. What are they trying to get at? They're talking about being able to cut the grass in these two cemeteries and look after the costs with a very minimal return. The regulation on the return is very difficult. For the 1% or 2% that they get on the guaranteed investments, the service charge is around 25% because of legislation by this government. You can imagine, if you're only getting 1% or 2%, which is pretty well, in this world today, guaranteed, maybe it would cost you 1% or 2%. Under the legislation, it's costing them almost 25%.

I've heard the same message in North Dundas—there's another cemetery up there—with the rules and regulations. They're able to get \$20,000 a year on their investment. They now have to look after an accountant's fee—it's required. The cost on the investment is about a third of that \$20,000, plus the insurance. When they're finished, they have no money left to cut the grass. They're taking donations. They have volunteers cutting the grass. They were able, a few years ago, to get a loan so that they were able to buy lawn mowers. So they have the lawn mowers. They have to fundraise to buy the gas.

The township is involved because they're looking at this—you know, we think it's a small problem, but under the legislation the township has to take it over if it fails. They're saying they're required to hire three men to do that work in the summer for that one graveyard.

Those are the types of extra costs we're looking at putting on the people of Ontario with just crazy legislation—\$20,000 that doesn't get to do the job in that case.

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Now they're talking about a bill that's in place. They can do everything that's here. They're worried about debate on it. It's almost like—I think as the member from the third party said—they realize that they don't want people talking about this bill, because it's an embarrassment.

The problems this province has, and we're dealing with something in this House that time-allocates—this is about the sixth bill that is time-allocated. This is the government that said they were going to be open and wanted to hear from the people, but everything we do makes sure that people don't get a chance to have comment on their bills. In an election that was just a short time ago—six months—that was a different message.

We also heard of an election campaign where, again—and I guess people shouldn't be believing this—there would be no tax increases. Now we're talking about a possible carbon tax.

If these things were really so important, why weren't they in the platform? I don't want to say people were deceived, because people should know now that they shouldn't necessarily listen to everything that's said by some parties. But it's getting to a point where election campaigns are simply there to say what they think people might want to hear. Times are tough. There are going to be some tough actions. Unfortunately, we're seeing tough actions, but it's all done under the covers.

At the Winchester hospital last year, they closed 25%, or 22%, of their beds. These are beds they had just opened. This government spent millions of dollars; the community fundraised millions of dollars—\$5 million or \$6 million, I think—to build these extra facilities, and they're closed. The nurses who would have been there are not hired.

They're talking about cuts, and there are cuts in nurses. They might have talked about the Harris days, where nurses weren't cut—but that's the message they tell, and if you tell it enough, people listen to you. But if it was so bad, why are we seeing more? Obviously, they didn't agree with the Harris government. They thought they didn't cut enough, because that's what we're seeing. We're seeing people cut.

Front-line home care in my area: again, another promise I thought I heard from the other government—they would increase that. In my riding, and I think in most of Ontario, we're seeing cuts in home care.

Again, I can see why this government is a little worried about the opposition debating bills, because it brings up some of these things. If I were them—and I think I hear it from the third party—I'd be embarrassed if it was six months or less after an election and you're already changing everything you're going to do.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Five months.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Five months, and all of a sudden, everything has changed. These supposed priorities that have to get through weren't talked about.

Child care: Everybody agreed that there needed to be some changes in the child care bill. But why are you

getting rid of 65% or 63% of the spaces by requiring the private child care providers—and no hearings. They didn't go around the province. These are generally people who are working during the working day. They're not generally high-income. Being able to travel from Ottawa or my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry to Toronto is a problem, and it just can't happen. First of all, they have to find somebody to look after the children that so many people are requiring them to look after. Now you're saying, "We'll give you a few hours on a couple of days in Toronto, if you want to speak." And you can easily see that there are going to be no amendments anyway.

I have letters from my constituents begging us to make some changes: "Let us register." They have no problem with that. What's this idea that you have to go through another third party or a franchise, which just means more money, more costs, and more costs for people who are having trouble affording it today?

In our case, we had the benefit of a neighbour who looked after our children, and it served us very well. It was easy. We were able to take the children over in the morning, get to work and come back. They were looked after until we were there to pick them up.

Now in rural areas, you'd probably have to drive in the opposite direction to find somebody. Try to find a place in Cornwall; there are waiting lists there for spaces.

We're talking about a bill that not only doesn't address the issues but makes it worse. We're looking at something like 140,000 spaces lost.

That's why, I think, in a lot of ways, it's good that we have a bill like this, because I don't think it's going to hurt anybody. But what we're seeing is legislation being put through by this government that is hurting somebody.

The other thing we talked about that I see in this bill is the discussion about identifying the red tape. But one really wonders. From my history here—it's a short history; it has only been three years—we've seen this government do everything it can to make sure you don't find out what's going on sometimes. So the fact that they're going to accumulate a list of red tape—are they going to release the report? Are we going to see that? I don't know if that's guaranteed in this bill.

I've sat through some committees on government agencies where getting a simple report released took months—filibustering by the Liberal Party, meeting after meeting—just to get a simple report, to release a document that had been produced a couple of years before.

Interjection: That was ridiculous, wasn't it?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Well, the third party introduced it in early December. It was the end of March before they finally ran out of being able to speak and they got caught. The meeting didn't end in time for them not to have forced a vote. It was through lots of experience.

The real insult was when I was at a session just a couple of weeks ago with the teachers who were in from across the province. The member—I won't say who it was, but on the other side—complained that his biggest complaint here was how the opposition parties filibuster and don't allow the working of this province. I sat there,

and I thought, "Well, I've seen you talk for 20 minutes, followed by one of your partners and then one of your other colleagues, and then put an amendment on just to get through a committee meeting," so that at the next meeting we started all over again, in that case.

We saw this through the gas plants. I think it was a tactical error by the Liberals when they allowed committee meetings during the summer, where the meetings went more than just the hour and a half, so all of a sudden, filibustering for a whole day was no longer possible. The committees then were allowed to actually force a vote, letting some of these reports out, and we saw what happened.

The first tactic was they thought they could ignore the committee, and of course, the rules of Parliament are very stringent, and committees have some rights. As history proves out, the records were delayed, and finally they were ordered to be released without redactions, without any omissions, and of course everybody saw what they were.

We received thousands of documents, but one would have to wonder: When you see a document that is released and it has got half the page or three quarters of the page whited out so that you can't read it—obviously, it's not released. What is there that you can't see? The order was not to do that, but that clearly went on. Of course, they were denying that it was going on, but this stuff was released. The press could see it. That was clearly there.

Then we find out that even though we had pages of full letters with one line showing, another 20,000 showed up that they didn't know about. So why would we have any trust on this side that we actually saw them all?

I think there is some history there, and this just goes on about why we are in this time allocation, and why this bill, that talks about releasing information—are we going to actually get that? Is it just as the member from Pembroke had said? Is it just more spin by this government to look like we're really trying to get to the point? I really wonder about this. It shows the frustration we have when we come through this building.

The time allocation message doesn't want to—it's the sixth bill we've seen here. It just seems funny that they talked about needing three or four bills, and this is where we are.

So there is a little frustration from our House leaders. I listen to our House leader when he talks about his meetings—the member from the Brockville area—and how the co-operation is questionable, I guess you'd say.

When I went through this bill, and we talked about getting rid of the regulations that are hurting—I hear this every day about some of the issues. One of the big issues that's hurting us is energy costs, and I don't see anything that's talking about fixing that issue. It's the number one issue in my riding and, I think, across the province.

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We heard an agri-food business just last week, a major employer in western Ontario—they were very clear: They're going to expand, a much larger centre, into Michigan. They gave two reasons. One was the cost of

energy—they couldn't afford to compete here anymore in Ontario—and the other was the pending pension plan. They just said they couldn't, in good conscience, build that facility here. Ten years ago, they would have built that here. We had some of the lowest energy costs in North America. We also had competitive labour. But we're losing that because of the WSIB costs they're putting on, and they just don't see that. They see these businesses as a candy store, an opportunity to tax: "Let's go at them."

But you know, in this day and age, with free trade, we demand good products. If I look around my home, most homes, TVs aren't made in North America anymore. They're cheaper, bigger and better from some of the other countries. We demand the best; we demand the best wherever they're produced.

When people are buying things today, they don't look—I have a lot of pride in our labour force and what we can produce, but unfortunately the population generally looks at price at some time. When you're pricing yourself out of the market—certainly our neighbours are no longer buying our products in the States. It's unfortunate, because that was the basis for our quality of life, for our income. We're losing the ability to pay.

The other thing that's really hurting is the regulation and some of the costs on labour, and how we've made it so difficult for people to survive.

I got this letter through my office, and they asked me to read it, so I thought I would read it; today would be as good a day as any. The subject of the letter is: "A sad day." I'm reading it verbatim:

"Not that this letter means much but I feel that I need to tell my story to someone. On the 25th of September 2014 I had to shut my business down due to the excessive wages bestowed onto me due to unionization. On February 24 2014 my company was unionized with the IBEW. A plot (in my mind) that was strategically planned by the IBEW.

"December 30 of 2013, three men worked on a site when my company was officially closed due to the Christmas season. There were two card based and one that was not as indicated by the labour board. The labour board did not once disclose to me the two that were card based and am not sure if the labour board conducted an inquiry on this. Simply union word over mine.

"After unionization it was told to me that IBEW will help me with the transition and they offered me a sum that I felt might work. But it proved to be fatal. I was competing and pricing work which I always seem to be consistently 8% higher than non-union and union competitors. After careful examination the profit was less than 1% and they were lower by 8%. Something is wrong with this.

"Seven months went by paying in excess of \$450,000 extra in wages and union stabilization fund equalled to \$80,000—a far cry from help.

"I have lost my business that has been situated in Amprior for 70 years. Lost any of my retirement savings and now I need to actively search for employment, a 54-

year-old person starting over. I wish to bow out gracefully but it has its challenges as well. I would like to finish up on going to jobs which I have started but IBEW refuses to send my men back to work or others to help me. They finally sent me one man but not enough to satisfy the workload. My clients want to work with me but realize I cannot do all this work in a short period of time with one man. Union representatives are cruising my work areas to make sure that I am abiding by the rules. I'm done and they still are kicking at me.

"Changes need to be made so others do not follow in my footsteps. I would appreciate if government would at least let me bow out gracefully so my creditors will not be punished more, due to ongoing harassment.

"Please forward my letter to the Liberal government (Premier of Ontario) so they are aware of this and their solution for unionization."

It's not an issue with unionization. The issue is really about fair play. This is a person who I guess was active on the file and now he seems to be penalized. Two people in a workforce of 40 or 50 people determined the future of this company. Half of the employees quit outright, because they did not want to work under a union; they wanted to work under an open contract. Then they would not send electricians over to work with him. They sent him one person. With his contracts, he couldn't get the work done. There were lawsuits. I mean, he ended up going bankrupt and losing his retirement savings.

These are things that are happening in Ontario. You know, most people don't believe that's happening. The contractors are afraid to talk about it, because they'd get targeted just like this person.

Those are regulations brought in by that government, and I think it's time that we look at what's going on, time to help business. These are people who were paying taxes. Now he's going to need help and he's on welfare. That's not doing anybody any good. It's not helping our health system, and it's not helping the people of Ontario.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 10:15, and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a special report of the Auditor General entitled 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Security.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to welcome two of my constituents from Georgetown, Dave and Cheryl Potosky, who are in the members' gallery. Welcome.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce two Welland professional firefighters, Steve McQueen and Joel Myers, in the members' gallery.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm very pleased to introduce two Hamilton members of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, two good friends, Ron Summers and Stan Double, who are here with us this morning. Welcome.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It gives me great privilege to welcome to Queen's Park today some friends of mine from the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce: general manager Shannon Churchill—and her son Colton Churchill—as well as Chris Bregman and Francesca Bury. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to welcome our page captain Steven Kottaras's family today: his mother, Angie Sutter-Kottaras; grandmother Rena Kottaras; and grandfather Steve Kottaras. They're in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome our Hamilton firefighters, Stan Double and Ron Summers, to Queen's Park today. Welcome, everybody.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I have several introductions today. First of all, Rick Harms, a project engineer with the city of Thunder Bay, is here today in his capacity with the Ontario Good Roads Association. Welcome to Rick.

I have two Thunder Bay professional firefighters here today as well: Dennis Brescacin and Phil Dzuba. I believe I'm meeting with them later today; just nod if that's the case.

Finally, Speaker, I'd like to introduce Nathan Lawrence and Michael Nitz, who are here today from Thunder Bay as part of the contingent of the Young Professionals Network of Ontario. Welcome to them as well.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Good morning, Speaker. I have three guests here from my riding: Middlesex county engineer Chris Traini; Sandi Lopenen, an Elgin county librarian; and I'd also like to welcome professional firefighter Warren Scott from St. Thomas. Welcome.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome two Niagara Falls professional firefighters, Todd Brunning and Dave Jarrett. Thanks for coming—and all the firefighters who are here today.

I'd also like to welcome Glen Walker, who's from Positive Living Niagara. Thanks for coming.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I have two introductions today. Nick Zalewski, a page for this session from my riding of Don Valley East—his family is in the members' gallery today, in the back there. I would like to welcome his parents, Cathy O'Halloran and Jack Zalewski, and his grandmother Elizabeth, who's celebrating her birthday tomorrow.

Also, I'd like to welcome the Ontario Library Association, which is here today meeting with MPPs. I'd like to welcome president Anita Brooks Kirkland, vice-president Jane Hilton and executive director Shelagh Paterson, who are my guests today in the opposition gallery. Are they over there? There they are. Nice to see you.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure to welcome to the House Teeswater native Christine Bregman, who works for the Strathroy chamber of commerce. Her family have been long-time friends, and I went to high school with Christine and her sister.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have visitors: Mr. Kris Vopel and Mark Muldoon. Both are professional firefighters from the city of Greater Sudbury.

I also have Rick Kennedy and Stacey Mayhall with the AIDS Network. Stacey is from North Bay.

Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to welcome two firefighters from my riding of Richmond Hill: Greg Horton and Jeff Voisin. Please join me in welcoming them to the Ontario Legislature.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to introduce from PARN, which services Peterborough, the city of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland and Haliburton: Kim Dolan, executive director; and Mark Phillips, the vice-president of the board of directors. Welcome to Queen's Park this morning.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Ruth Cameron, executive director of ACKWA from Waterloo region; and Brett Gibson and Dean Good, awesome firefighters from Waterloo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to introduce, from the Ontario Professional Firefighters, from my riding, Ann Bryan, Peter Nolan and Fred LeBlanc. Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I would like to welcome, in the gallery, Shanna Pearson, Susanna Hubbard Krimmer and Sophia Aspotol. They're from the Ontario Library Association. Welcome.

I've also got a number of firefighters here from the Midland fire service, the Orillia fire service and the Barrie fire service. I'm not going to mention everybody's names. I'm not sure exactly who they are right now, but welcome to Queen's Park.

M. Michael Mantha: Je voudrais souhaiter une extrêmement belle fête à ma collègue fédérale. Son nom est Carol Hughes. Elle est la députée pour Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing. Elle est à Ottawa. Bonne fête, Carol.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's my pleasure to welcome a number of folks from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association; first, Ed Kennedy and Doug Erwin, from the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association. Ed is the current president and a wonderful constituent of mine in Pickering-Scarborough East. We also have Colin Arnott and Neil Delory from the Pickering Professional Firefighters Association. Welcome all.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I had a great meeting this morning with Jason Crites from the Cornwall Fire Department and Bruce Donig from the provincial firefighters' association, who is also from east Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome Pete Dyson and Ken Whetham, from Oshawa Fire Ser-

vices. I see Bob Brandon from Whitby fire in the corner, so I would also like to welcome those from Whitby.

Also, I am pleased to welcome the executive director of AIDS Durham, Adrian Betts, and board chair Derek Stott today to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: On behalf of the members from the great city of Ottawa, I want to welcome great and brave Ottawa firefighters John Sobey, Malcolm Todd and Erik Leicht. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to welcome to the House today Andrew Rogerson and Brad McCann of the Stratford Professional Fire Fighters' Association.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to introduce Peter Osterberg, who is from the Timmins Professional Firefighters and also the political action director for the organization. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my great pleasure to welcome two members from the Cambridge Professional Fire Fighters' Association, my good friends Chris Davidson and John Holman.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I also want to recognize Michael Nitz and Nathan Lawrence of the Young Professionals Network of Ontario. There's a reception being held today at noon in room 228.

And of course, to fire fighters from Thunder Bay Dennis Brescacin and Phil Dzuba and also Eric Nordlund from the Thunder Bay Professional Fire Fighters Association. Welcome.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today the president of the Burlington Professional Firefighters Association, Dan VanderLelie; and his colleague Paul Cunningham—and the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, from Oakville, Carmen Santoro; and Ernie Thorne, his vice-president. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. David Oraziotti: It's my pleasure to introduce Marty Kenopic and Robert Shaughnessy of the Sault Ste. Marie Professional Fire Fighters association.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think it's safe to say that we love our firefighters.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To show you that I do too: With us in the Speaker's gallery today are the president of the Brantford professional fire fighters, Tom Smith—welcome, Tom—and an old neighbourhood buddy from a long time ago, from Toronto, Ernie Thorne. Glad you're here, Ernie.

Congratulations, everybody. Thank you.

It is now time for question period.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

There's no debate that everyone deserves the ability to retire comfortably. But getting there should not result in the loss of jobs or the closing of small business. Yet that's exactly what your Ontario retirement pension tax is poised to do.

Opposing your plan is the top priority of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I'll be presenting their 3,600 petitions later today. Four out of five of their members oppose your plan; 69% of their members say that they will freeze or cut salaries; more than half will reduce employees; and 13% will just plain and simply close their doors.

Premier, when people have been fired or companies been put out of business, what kind of retirement do you imagine for them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thought for a moment there, as the member began his question, that he had switched his position and that he was actually going to support the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, because as the member opposite knows, there is a fair degree of consensus across the country that it would be a very good thing for the Canada Pension Plan to be enhanced. I'm assuming that the member opposite is not making an argument that the Canada Pension Plan is a bad thing, because there are all of our constituents across the province who have benefited from the existence of the Canada Pension Plan, and so many thousands of Canadians have had the opportunity to have some security in their retirement because of the Canada Pension Plan.

We have said that it would be a very good thing if the Canada Pension Plan could be enhanced, but Stephen Harper has decided that is not what he is going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, it's policies like your pension tax that hold Ontario back and drive jobs away. As a lifelong entrepreneur, to me it's simple: You get rid of the payroll tax so that small business is encouraged to actually create jobs.

There are solutions you could pursue to achieve this goal without hurting small business: voluntary pooled retirement pensions; financial literacy in our schools. Those are two examples, Premier. These will help people achieve their retirement goals while having a job long enough to actually get there.

Over 50 chambers of commerce signed a letter to your government expressing concern over your pension tax. They're still waiting for an answer. Ontario business is clear. Families are clear. Neither can incur this new tax. Premier, why aren't you listening to them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, let me just say first of all that a number of the things the member opposite has mentioned, we're already on. I know that the member for Whitby—Oshawa knows that I worked with the late Jim Flaherty to make sure that financial literacy was in our curriculum, and it is there.

Let me pick up from where I was talking about the Canada Pension Plan. The federal Conservatives have decided that the Canada Pension Plan will not be enhanced at this point, even though there is agreement

across the country that that is something that needs to be looked at. So we have said, because 77% of Ontarians support an increase to pension benefits—let me just repeat that: 77% of Ontarians support an increase to pension benefits—we made the decision, and ran on this, that we would put in place an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan that would come into place in January 2017.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, if you won't listen to small business or families, perhaps you'll listen to the advice from your very own Ministry of Finance experts.

I'd like page Steven to provide you, your finance minister and the associate minister with copies of your internal document, which clearly shows that for every \$2 billion in payroll tax you siphon out of our pockets, you eliminate 18,000 jobs in the province.

This confidential advice to cabinet, which you received, states your pension tax will result in "lower business investment, relocation ... to other jurisdictions, reduced work effort" and "out-migration of people."

Premier, you already know the result of this new tax. Your own people are telling you how harmful this will be to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —Ontario's economy. By going ahead—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Be seated.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows that there are thousands of Ontarians—in fact, the majority of Ontarians don't have a workplace pension plan, and he knows that the enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan would be a good thing. In fact, if the member opposite wants to talk about internal documents, perhaps he'd like to talk about the Harper government's own internal documents about the benefits of expanding pensions: "In the long run, expanding the CPP would bring economic benefits. Higher savings will lead to higher income in the future and higher consumption possibilities for seniors."

In fact, the member opposite knows that our timing of bringing in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan in January 2017 is to coincide with the reduction in EI payments off the payroll at that time. So we are talking to small business, but we know that people in Ontario need this security. In fact, people across the country need this security.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My next question is back to the Premier. Small businesses are staggering under the burden of your skyrocketing energy, new taxes and fees and unnecessary red tape. You throw all of this at them, and then wonder why so many businesses are leaving Ontario. We already have the highest electricity rates in North America, and they're projected to go up a further

42% in the next five years. Your failed renewable plan has us exporting power to Quebec and the United States at a loss of \$1 billion in October alone—Premier, that's a whole gas plant scandal in one month.

After your pension tax, this is the CFIB's biggest issue; 93% of their members want a leader who will commit to relief in energy. Premier, why can't you be that leader?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We just went through an election campaign where we made it clear that our priority was to work in the best interests of people across this province, to make sure that we work with businesses to increase jobs. In fact, we have more than 550,000 net new jobs since the recession. That's a very good thing.

In terms of our relationship on energy with Quebec, I don't know if the member opposite missed the announcement on Friday, but we have just made, really, a historic agreement with Quebec to trade energy in our peak times, when we need power and they need power. That is a good deal for the people of Ontario, and it's a good deal for the people of Quebec. In fact, it's a good deal for the people of Canada when provinces are working together.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, in addition to your skyrocketing energy rates, you've slapped small businesses with an unnecessary WSIB premium through Bill 119. Requiring family-owned contractors to pay WSIB coverage even though they already have better private insurance is just another tax on small business, independent tradespeople and contractors. This is cutting directly into their livelihood. For many, it's the straw that breaks their financial back. We all know this is a tax designed to bail out another Liberal mess, the \$14-billion unfunded liability at WSIB.

Premier, will you address the real problem? Will you initiate a formal government task force to resolve the WSIB boondoggle, repeal Bill 119 and stop making small business pay for your mistakes?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: In fact, Bill 119 improves the unfunded liability, which is something that workers, employers and business people around the province of Ontario have been asking for. It's precisely the reason that it was brought in, because we believe in taking into account the real needs of Ontario's workers and business. Bill 119 is about improving the health and safety in the construction industry itself and to help business. It's about reducing the underground economic activity that takes place on a regular basis. We listened to the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: As I was saying, we did listen to the concern of all stakeholders, and as a result of that, we provided certain exemptions. Business had a reasonable period of time to adapt to the bill. We've heard from stakeholders that the underground economy needs to be addressed, and we did.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, for many small businesses, red tape is imposing a death by a thousand paper cuts. We had 2,700 fewer small businesses in Ontario last year than the year before. Premier, they're gone. Your red tape is costing Ontario businesses billions of dollars annually. A recent CFIB report shows that red tape is a hidden tax which costs the provincial economy \$11 billion each year. Even the smallest of firms spends \$6,000 per employee to comply with government regulations. That's money that can't be reinvested in their business.

Premier, the Liberal government shut down the Red Tape Commission established to prevent this. Will you re-establish the Red Tape Commission, support small business and make Ontario first?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Labour?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member has got to take a look at the facts: 183,000 net new jobs created by small businesses in Ontario since 2008. That's growing. That's good news. The fact is that the small business optimism index surged six points in October. It's now up to 70 points—among the top in the country. Those small businesses are a lot more optimistic than the member opposite. The member knows we have reduced regulatory burden by 17%.

If he really cares about small businesses, he would join us in Bill 7, which ensures that we do the single greatest ask of small businesses on the government, and that's coming forward with an annual report that ensures that our government's feet are held to the fire as we work with small businesses to continue to reduce regulatory burden—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. *Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

New question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. People are wondering why they should believe anything that this government tells them. The serious trust issues that existed pre-election continue. The Premier's Minister of Health says that cuts to health care and home care are a myth, but the province's CCACs are saying that nursing hours and PSW services are being cut back. You can't deny that.

How can the Premier expect people to believe her government when the cuts she denies not only exist but are the lived experience of people in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health is going to want to comment in the supplementary. But let me just repeat what I have said a number of times in this House, which is that we continue to put more money into home care and into community care to

allow people to get more service and to allow more people to get the service that they need in their homes so that they can stay in their homes and that the care that they get is adequate.

The other reality is that we are going through that transition. We are changing the system so that more people who might have traditionally been in hospital can get the services that they need in their homes. That means that there are changes happening in communities across the province. We continue to invest more, and we will continue to invest so that we can move through that transition and people can get the care that they need where they need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again to the Premier: Premier, it's not just health care. I don't think that you know where this money is going, because it is not going to the front line. It's happening across your entire government.

The Premier said that there is not a sell-off of our shared public assets, but Ed Clark has said in black and white that the plan is to sell off Hydro One's distribution business, even though it's profitable, and to privatize local hydro utilities, even though they're profitable—and he's opening the door to selling OPG hydro dams, even though they're profitable.

How can the Premier expect people to believe this government when they are saying they won't sell assets and then they turn around and propose the sell-off of those very same assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I guess there's a loose connection between that supplementary and the initial question.

What I will say is that we ran on both the issues that the member is raising. We said very clearly in our budget and in our platform that we were going to continue to transform the health care system, that we were going to continue to invest in the care that people need where they need it. We also said that we were going to ask Ed Clark to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario, and we were going to make sure that we were doing everything in our power to make sure that the value of those assets was optimized so that we could invest in the assets, in the infrastructure and the transportation infrastructure that's needed now, in 2014.

Ed Clark and his commission have looked at the assets. He has made recommendations. It's exactly what we said we were going to do, and we are going to act on those recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: There's no disconnection between the questions. The theme is that you say one thing and you do another thing.

Premier, after all the problems your government has had in the education sector, you are now proposing cuts to that ministry as well. Speaker, in public, the Premier says that there's more money going into schools; she just said it. In private, the documents show that half a billion

dollars is proposed to be slashed out of the school boards' budgets.

How can the Premier expect anyone to believe her when her government is denying health care cuts, they're denying the fact that they're selling off public assets, and they're denying that they are cutting public education budgets in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am well aware of the member opposite's background in education. I know she knows full well that there is more money in education, and there continues to be more money in education. She knows that the damage that was done under the previous regime has been repaired year after year after year under our government, and we will continue to do that.

But as we said: investments in home care and health care, investments in and the review of our assets, Mr. Speaker. We also said that we're going to work with school boards, because we know that there are fewer students in many of our schools. We know that school boards struggle often with the consolidation of schools. We know that there are ways that school boards can work together. We are going to work with school boards to make sure that they're able to do that, as we continue to invest in the talent and skills of our children.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier: Premier, transit riders are demanding that the Union Pearson Express become a true public transit service, not an exclusive service for business travellers. The public has paid half a billion dollars to build the Union Pearson Express. Can the Premier tell transit riders whether it's going to be affordable for ordinary travellers and commuters to use?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Toronto–Danforth for that question.

I think it's important to recognize that with respect to this particularly wonderful project that our government has been working on, this is something that will be fully operating in time for the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. It's a project that is on time and that is on budget.

I know that the team at Metrolinx has been working very closely and very hard to determine a fare that will be acceptable in terms of sustainability and also will provide the people of Toronto and the people coming to Toronto from around the world with the opportunity to be connected to Union Station for the very first time ever. I look forward to learning more, before the end of this year, of what the exact fare will be.

But the exciting thing is to remember that we will, for the first time, have a direct connection between two of our busiest transportation hubs in the country, Pearson airport and Union Station.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Ontarians have already paid half a billion dollars for the Union

Pearson Express, and more costs are coming. The people who are paying for the train should be able to ride it.

The government has leaked that there will be a discounted fare, but when the representatives of 40,000 airport workers were promised a public meeting with Metrolinx to talk about the fares, it never happened. If a deal exists, it took place behind closed doors and didn't include airport workers, so nobody knows if the deal is what airport workers have asked for.

Will the Premier ensure that the fares on the Union Pearson Express are affordable for travellers as well as the 40,000 people who work at Pearson airport?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm not quite sure I understand the point that the member opposite is referencing with respect to a leak by the government regarding this.

What I said in my initial answer was that the team at Metrolinx is working very, very hard to make sure that we land in a great spot for everybody across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Right across the province of Ontario, there are ongoing conversations that are taking place.

Of course, Speaker, there are a number of members on this side of the House, including the member from York South–Weston and the member from Davenport and others, who have brought forward some of the concerns and some of the suggestions from the people that they represent. They've done a wonderful job of doing that.

It's important to recognize—and I would sincerely hope that that member and that caucus would recognize—and celebrate the fact that we will, for the first time ever, in 2015, have that dedicated air-rail link. It will be available to people right across the region. It will provide an opportunity for tourists coming to Ontario to experience all that our province has to offer. This is a reason to celebrate.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The government is waiting to announce fares on December 11, the day the House rises. It's a very good day to bury an issue.

I'll ask today: In Vancouver, commuters can get to the airport for \$9. In Cleveland and Baltimore, it's \$2. In Philadelphia, you can take the train to the airport for \$8. Can the Premier tell Ontarians whether she'll ensure that getting to the airport in Toronto is affordable for travellers and airport workers alike?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I'm going to try to respond to this question as I did with the other two. We have to remember that in 2015, when the air-rail link, when the Union Pearson Express is operating—it's on time, it's on budget—for the first time ever, two of our busiest transportation hubs in the country will be connected: Union and Pearson.

I find it interesting as well that members from that caucus and some others will often talk about examples of what takes place in other jurisdictions. I would encourage those doing your research to actually look at an apples-to-apples comparison.

The bottom line, though, is that the team at Metrolinx is working very hard. I expect that before the end of this year, we will have more information about precisely what the fare is. I would ask that member to be a little bit more patient, but also to join with us in recognizing that we will have that dedicated air-rail link. It will help workers getting to the airport. It will help people right across the region, right across the province. It will provide tourists with that opportunity—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —to help support our economic development, and it will also—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, your government continues to levy a number of additional fees on hunters and anglers. In a matter of days, your ministry will introduce a service fee to Outdoors Cards and licences—an increase of 23% in certain instances. This comes after the ministry reported that the special purpose account, which is funded by licence fees and required to be used for the conservation of Ontario's fish and wildlife resources, increased by 31% in 2010-11.

This ministry continues to raise and introduce new fees to hunters and anglers even though they continue to shirk their responsibilities for maintaining our resources. The Environmental Commissioner states: "It appears that the Ministry of Natural Resources is walking away from many parts of its job to safeguard wildlife and natural resources."

Minister, why should hunters and anglers give you more money to mismanage our resources?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. Maybe in the supplementary, he can outline for me exactly what it is, apparently, that we're shirking or what responsibilities we're walking away from, and I'm looking forward to hearing those.

What I will say is that the decision to raise the fees in the SPA was a decision that was made a year ago it. It becomes live on December 1, I believe. There will be an increase to the fees.

I would say that one of the things that has been slightly misrepresented in the media on this issue is that it is one administration fee. It is not a series of fee increases. Hunters and fishermen, when they buy their licences, if they do one purchase for their Outdoors Card and for a hunting and fishing licence, it will be one fee, one time. If they buy them individually, it will be a \$2 increase each time.

The bottom line of this is the fact that the SPA supports the programs that are done in the province of Ontario, as it always has. There's a shortage of revenue. This is one of the ways we have found to keep those programs whole.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, it doesn't matter when the decision was made, but one new fee is one too many, on behalf of hunters and anglers.

It's no wonder that you continually have to tax hunters and anglers due to your government's mismanagement of the resources. How can you expect revenue to grow when you have mismanaged the moose population in northern Ontario, causing a decrease in hunting tags? You have limited fishing licences in northern Ontario. Overall, you're charging hunters and anglers more and delivering less.

Hunters and anglers want to know the truth. Your ministry has not released the annual report for the special purpose account, on which you were basing your fee increases, for the last three years. You can't be open and transparent and show where the money has gone.

Minister, with the Environmental Commissioner observing a decrease in your resource management and your lack of transparency when it comes to reporting the state of the special purpose account, how can you expect hunters and anglers in this province just to give you more money?

Hon. Bill Mauro: The member raises a fair point. I can tell him that the annual report on the special purpose account will be tabled very soon. I do thank him for raising that, and I will be happy to bring those into the Legislature.

Speaker, the member raised an issue relating to the moose populations in northwestern Ontario. In fact, we have learned that the moose populations in some of the wildlife management units in northern Ontario are in significant decline because we actually invested money from the very account that the member is now criticizing that we've raised the fees on.

We flew an aerial survey that cost about \$5 million. The money comes from the special purpose account, and it's that very data from that very account, having the money to expand, that provided the data for us to now go forward with a very significant moose management project on behalf of the hunters and tourist outfitters in northwestern Ontario.

I would tell you that as a group, they are very supportive of the work we're doing on the moose project. In fact, the tourist outfitters have embraced the work that we've done on this project.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Labour. I think that all members in this House would agree that first responders, such as the firefighters who are visiting us today in the Legislature, have demonstrated over and over again the enormously important role that they play in protecting our safety and our security. I want to thank them.

That's why, in the opinion of New Democrats, there would be no better way for this House to show its gratitude and respect for these first responders than to pass legislation that would directly affect and deal with post-traumatic stress disorder and the WSIB.

If passed, this presumptive legislation would mean that it would be presumed that front-line responders suffering from PTSD acquired the illness on the job and therefore are automatically eligible for WSIB benefits.

Minister, why won't this government commit immediately to passing PTSD legislation in this House?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the honourable member for what is a very, very important question.

Let us extend from this side of the House our sincere thanks for the role that first responders play on a daily basis to keep us safe in this province.

Applause.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It was certainly a valuable experience we gained from the round table that was held on mental stress, including PTSD, by all the first responders, which has taken place over the past 18 months and reported to us just recently. It has certainly provided us with the information we need to move forward.

Is presumptive a part of the solution? That is yet to be determined, but what there is a determination that we simply need to do more about PTSD—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'll answer, I think, a little bit more clearly in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Back to the minister: Post-traumatic stress disorder can emerge after exposure to a traumatic event or series of events and may include paranoia, nightmares, rage, flashbacks and panic attacks.

PTSD claims now are decided on a case-by-case basis, and appeals can take years to settle. This is simply unfair. The brave women and men who are the first responders to a crisis and who guarantee our safety and security shouldn't have to fight the system to prove that their PTSD condition is work-related.

For years New Democrats have been introducing legislation in this House to make PTSD presumptive, including Cheri DiNovo's Bill 2. A standing ovation is fine and it definitely is appreciated, I'm certain, but legislation is what firefighters are asking for, what our first responders are asking for.

Will this government commit today to passing legislation making PTSD a presumptive condition for the purposes of WSIB benefits immediately?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It was one of the proudest moments of my day when we announced presumptive coverage for our first responders when it came to cancer coverage and expanding that to heart injuries.

The ministry has released its report on the round table on traumatic mental stress. It provides insights into the ways that we can deal with this. As a result of that, what we're planning in the early part of 2015 is a summit on work-related stress, with a major emphasis on PTSD.

We want to move forward on this issue. We know that all Legislatures in this country should be treating this with the seriousness that it deserves. Ontario is treating it that way. Presumptive coverage may be a part of the

solution. I've met with the member from Parkdale-High Park on this issue personally. I commit to moving ahead on this issue.

1110

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Earlier this month, the minister visited my riding, the great city of Burlington, to discuss our government's new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, share information on how this plan will create a secure retirement future for millions of Ontarians and listen to both the concerns and the suggestions of stakeholders in my community.

In that regard, I was pleased to participate in this meeting and hear a broad range of perspectives from my constituents, including business owners, community leaders and young entrepreneurs.

I know the minister valued the feedback she received. Could the minister please inform this House what she has been learning from Ontarians in her meetings and discussions on the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the hard-working member from Burlington for this question.

Since taking on my role as the associate minister, I've had dozens of meetings with Ontarians about the ORPP. What I've learned so far is that this issue of retirement security relates to everyone, and the reasons why we are moving forward are crystal clear. When families discuss their futures at the dinner table, their underlying concern is, "Can I save enough?" This is particularly true for the middle-income group. We know why. Two thirds of workers in Ontario do not have workplace pensions, and people are living longer, meaning their savings need to stretch further; this creates fear and uncertainty.

For individuals, this is concerning, because it means tomorrow's seniors are at risk of retiring with a lower standard of living. For our economy, this means slower growth and more people relying on publicly funded social assistance programs.

Our colleagues on the other side of the floor would prefer that we do nothing. I've heard from Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you to the minister for that response.

Again to the Associate Minister of Finance: I am pleased to hear about the insights that you are gaining from these meetings. I know it was very helpful for my constituents to have the opportunity to meet with you to learn more about the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. They appreciated the opportunity to hear about the plan's framework as it takes shape, and they valued the chance to share their ideas about how our government should proceed, both with respect to the design of the plan and its implementation. Specifically, I know many appreciated the chance to share their perspectives and discuss ways that the ORPP will impact them.

Can the minister please inform the House whether she will be visiting other communities across our province to discuss the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Again, thank you to the hard-working member from Burlington.

As part of my mandate from the Premier, I am reaching out to businesses, industry groups, community associations and everyday people to get their input on the ORPP. I want to ensure that we are creating the best plan for the people of Ontario, and to do that, I am committed to meeting with and listening to Ontarians across the province.

Last month, I began the first part of my tour on the ORPP, and to date I've met with Ontarians in Sudbury, Brantford, Burlington, Hamilton and Toronto, and just yesterday in Mississauga. Over the coming weeks, I'll be holding meetings in Ottawa and London, to name a few. In addition, Ontarians can write to me by email or through the ORPP website to ensure their insights are included in our plan.

I look forward to continuing to listen to the people across the province so we can build the best possible plan for the people of Ontario.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Premier. What role does the defeated Liberal candidate in Perth–Wellington have in the government? Does the Premier think it's appropriate for that individual to be making public announcements of new funding for municipalities when the area's elected MPPs have yet to be officially notified?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I can tell you that there are many people across this province who have run in elections, have been defeated and then go on to do other things. Sometimes they go on to work with government, sometimes they go on to work in municipal governments, sometimes they go on to other business. But I can tell you that the former candidate in Perth–Wellington has been very much a supporter of the policies of this government, and he is a very strong community advocate for that part of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: To the Premier: Last week, in a press release from the Perth–Wellington Provincial Liberal Association, the former candidate announced infrastructure money for local municipalities. The press release was misleading and inaccurate. It was a Liberal press release from the former Liberal candidate announcing public money. Is that part of the job description for staffers working on the public dime in the office of the Minister of Agriculture? If not, what are you or the minister going to do about it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will say—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection: Totally inappropriate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are some things that happen in here that are totally inappropriate. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't have any information on the specifics of a particular press release.

But what I can say is that I am quite sure that if there was information about money flowing to a municipality, the municipality had that information, and that anyone who wanted to talk about it could talk about it, including the member for Perth–Wellington. Had he wanted to talk about infrastructure investment—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Stop the clock.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've just been handed a copy of the press release, which says, "Ontario Government Invests Over \$1.3 Million Across Perth–Wellington." This isn't an announcement; this is a statement of something that is happening.

As I said, if the member opposite wanted to talk about what investments were being made in his riding, I would think that would be a very good thing, to inform his riding about the benefits of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We are hitting code blue now. That's when there is a critical incident in one of the province's jails, and there's an inmate or correctional officer who needs help. Well, Mr. Speaker, they need immediate help.

Just this week in Hamilton, two inmates were assaulted by a third in the same cell—three to a cell meant for two; not enough officers, too many inmates. I just toured the Niagara correctional facility and it's the same issues there. The officers are so fed up, they held an information picket.

When will this minister—when will this government—dispense with the rhetoric and do something about the deplorable state of this province's jails?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. I appreciate the fact that she has taken the time to visit many detention centres across the province, as I have. Most importantly, what I'm doing is taking the time to meet with our correctional officers and our correctional staff, to thank them for the hard work they do every single day and make sure that we are working together in transforming our correctional system.

I'm very excited by the opportunity that has been given to me by our Premier in terms of making sure that we have a correctional system that focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration of our inmates in our community. We will get that work done by working with our correc-

tional officers and our staff. We're engaged in very constructive conversation as to what those positive ideas are. I look forward to working with them to make sure that we're making a meaningful difference in our correctional system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's not just Niagara; it's not just Hamilton. When hasn't it been London?

Today marks almost a week-long lockdown at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre because of violence, overcrowding and understaffing. Frankly, it's because of deplorable conditions.

What are the minister's immediate plans—plans today—to fix EMDC?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the member opposite knows quite well that I had the opportunity of visiting the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre about a month or so ago. I spent over three hours touring the facility and making sure that we are working together on solutions to improve the conditions at EMDC as well.

I think the member also knows that we have already installed 357 additional security cameras and new X-ray machines, and I have hired 11 additional correctional officers at EMDC, not to mention a new mental health nurse.

The next step is that we will be building a new regional intermittent centre at the same site where EMDC is located. The procurement is in process. That is going to help even further with the capacity issues and making sure that contraband products are not entering the prison.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. My community of Cambridge has many entrepreneurs ranging in all ages. These entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of Ontario's next-generation economy. Their ideas are needed to help keep Ontario on the cutting edge. For Ontario's economy to remain competitive in the extremely fierce global marketplace, we need to support our entrepreneurs and especially our youth.

I was very happy to hear the minister recently announce the Make Your Pitch competition in the high school that he attended in Scarborough. My son Liam in grade 12 and his high school friends will want to know more about that as they are planning for their future and entry into the workforce. Would the minister please explain more about the competition to the House and how it's helping high school entrepreneurs gain the skills that they need to succeed?

Hon. Brad Duguid: If the member's son Liam is anything like the member, if he enters the contest, he's a sure thing to win. There's no question about that whatsoever.

The member is right: I was in my former high school a few weeks back, and I was given an opportunity to meet some of the young entrepreneurs in that high school and

launch a program called the Young Entrepreneurs, Make Your Pitch program and competition. This is an interesting effort. It's part of our effort that the Minister of Education is very engaged in, in trying to instill entrepreneurial thinking throughout our education system. This is a competition that challenges high school students to pitch their business idea in a two-minute video. The videos will be evaluated by judges. There will be 20 finalists who will present their ideas to a panel of judges. There will be six winners selected who will be provided reserved entry into Ontario's very successful Summer Company program that includes mentoring, training and a grant of up to \$3,000 to launch their small businesses. We're very excited about this program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the minister, I want to say thank you. The information will help, and I'll encourage many youth in my Cambridge community to enter the competition. As you know, I spend a lot of time with my kids and their friends, discussing their post-secondary education and job market options. This is great news, not just for young entrepreneurs in my community but across the province.

As many of us must hear, my constituents are concerned about youth employment in general. I know that our government has introduced many programs and initiatives to help youth enter and succeed in our province's job market. My own kids and their friends are considering these options as they plan their future. The youth jobs strategy that was introduced in the 2013 budget has shown real success. Would the minister please update the House on our success in combatting youth unemployment?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you again for the supplementary. There was great news last month: Youth employment in Ontario increased by 6,300 jobs. That was fantastic news. The month before, youth employment had increased by 12,600 jobs. So there is no question we're on a very good trend when it comes to increase in opportunities for young people.

The youth unemployment rate also dropped by 2.1% last month. That's the largest drop we've seen in a very long time in youth unemployment. Since the fall of 2013, more than 23,000 job experience opportunities have been created under our youth jobs strategy.

We're working very, very hard with respect to trying to ensure that young people get job experiences and get opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits. We recognize that youth unemployment is still too high in Ontario, and that's why we're continuing to open up those opportunities for experiential learning, job experiences and entrepreneurial opportunities for our youth.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, for years your ministry has been cutting back services at Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital.

Two years ago, hundreds of county residents came here to Queen's Park to protest, to save their hospital when surgical services, delivery room services and other beds at the hospital were threatened. Five thousand Prince Edward county residents signed a petition that I delivered to the previous health minister to help save their hospital.

Last night it was learned that Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital was refused funding for a small and rural hospital because the ministry decided that it was under a half-hour drive to Belleville General Hospital. Clearly, no one from the ministry has ever driven from Picton to Belleville.

Minister, why is your government continually making health care cuts at Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I'm happy to actually sit down and talk with the member opposite to get more details. I know that this was a recent decision, according to the member opposite. But across the province we've dramatically increased our funding to the hospital system in this province, despite the fact that we are also moving more and more services into the communities.

When it does come to our small-town and rural hospitals, we have a special initiative that does focus on them and appreciates and acknowledges the unique needs that they might face in providing those high-quality services to the constituents in their catchment areas. That fund, by the way, for small and rural hospitals is a \$20-million annual fund.

Again, I'm happy to speak with the member opposite with regard to the specifics of this hospital, and I hope that he takes me up on that offer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: I will indeed, Minister. It's very important that you understand what Prince Edward county is all about. It's home to one of the fastest-growing senior populations in the province. Sandbanks Provincial Park is there. It attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the country, and it's well more than a half hour from Belleville General Hospital. As a matter of fact, thousands of Prince Edward county residents live more than an hour away from Belleville General Hospital, so a fully operational hospital in Picton isn't a luxury for the county's future; it's actually critical. It's a necessity for the county's future.

It's mind-boggling when you see things like \$400 million being spent on an empty office building across the street here, at MaRS. We don't want to see our Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital continue to empty out at the rate it has been emptying out over the last several years.

So, Minister, will your government stop making cuts to Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital, and will you reconsider that application for the small- and rural-hospital funding?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I'm more than willing to sit down with the member opposite.

But I would also suggest that if he's looking for the government's commitment to hospitals in small and rural

parts of this province, he needs to look no further than his seatmate from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because the two of us, just a couple of months ago, had the pleasure of announcing the rebuilding of a brand new hospital in Markdale, which is an important hospital in his community.

We are committed to hospitals. Whether they're in Toronto, whether they're in Thunder Bay, whether they're in Markdale, whether they are in any riding across this province, our commitment is equal.

The member does know, at the same time, that we are undergoing changes in our funding model so we're focused on quality of care. We rely on our LHINs as well to work with local communities, as they are in this instance, to make sure that the decisions that are made truly do provide the quality of care that Ontarians, wherever they reside, require.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games.

Honesty about the Pan/Parapan Am Games has been in very short supply, whether it's conveniently forgetting to include the cost of the athletes' village in the cost of the games or the security costs that have gone from \$113 million to \$206 million to \$239 million to an even higher number that the minister won't even reveal. The auditor says that we've missed opportunities to save money. We're behind schedule. The government has underestimated the costs, and those costs may well go up.

When will the minister give us a final cost for the Pan Am Games?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I'd also like to thank the Auditor General for her report in regard to the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

The Auditor General confirms that the process to procure private security services and security advisers here in the province of Ontario for these games was transparent and followed the government procurement policy. In fact, her report directly contradicts the claim that the NDP had months ago when they actually asked for the audit. She says that the process that was in place was above board and followed government procedure.

We're quite proud of our record here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Well, the auditor had a lot to say about how this government is wasting money again and has taken bad steps in terms of how these games should be managed. The auditor said, "A key lesson learned from the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games is the need to carefully plan for and acquire security services as far in advance ... as possible."

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With only nine months remaining before the games begin, TO2015 has only just issued a request for proposals for contract asset protection security services, nor

has TO2015 completed all the procurements for security equipment. She says that falling so far behind is only going to further drive up costs.

These games were ordered in 2009; they shouldn't have snuck up on anyone. With less than a year to go, how are we so far behind?

Hon. Michael Coteau: So far behind? I was in Markham on Sunday at the opening of the Markham aquatics centre—which was well under budget—with 3,000 people. In fact, that aquatics centre was in full operation; it was in community use. We're seeing the same thing in Scarborough; we're seeing the same thing all over the 10,000-square-kilometre radius that the Pan Am Games will be held in—that includes 15 municipalities.

Time and time again, the NDP has criticized these games. They have criticized the fact that we've been well under budget when it comes to our infrastructure. They've criticized the fact that the Hamilton stadium is under delay; in fact, we know that the Tiger-Cats have been undefeated in that stadium.

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Coteau: So I want the NDP—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Sorry, time is up.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. There's no question that domestic violence is a heart-wrenching and disturbing problem. Every day, women and children across our province are forced to leave their homes to flee from situations of abuse. This is unacceptable.

As Statistics Canada reports, 83% of the victims of domestic violence are women. In fact, a report from the Canadian Federation of University Women suggests that close to half of all women and young girls will be affected by violence in the course of their lives.

Minister, while Ontario has amongst the lowest rates of domestic violence across Canada, we still have a lot to accomplish. Please tell me what initiatives your directorate has implemented to raise awareness of domestic violence and to strengthen support for victims.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you to the member for Halton for raising this very serious and important issue of domestic violence.

As a government, we have increased funding by 51% since 2003 for community services that help victims of domestic violence. In 2011, the Ontario Women's Directorate launched a \$15-million, four-year sexual violence action plan. The Ontario Women's Directorate has also implemented numerous initiatives to raise awareness of domestic violence and strengthen support for victims.

We've provided training for more than 37,000 front-line professionals and service providers to detect domestic violence and to help support victims. We've started public education campaigns. This government is very, very committed to the issue of supporting women who face violence. It's one of our key priorities, and we'll continue to invest in this regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Minister. I think this government has demonstrated that it is working hard to support victims of violence. In my riding of Halton, I know there are agencies that are working tirelessly to support and protect women and children in our communities. Recently, I took a tour of Halton Women's Place and got a first-hand look at incredible work that they do for victims of domestic violence. I was inspired by the accomplishments and the compassion and dedication of the staff there to ensure that the women and children staying there are given a safe and comfortable environment in which to heal. In fact, we recently raised a flag in Milton to shine a light on this troubling issue.

While we are making important progress, advocates say that there is still work to do to improve support for our hard-working front-line workers. Minister, can you please describe the government's efforts to improve supports to those who provide assistance to those most in need?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: The challenging yet very important work of supporting women and their children in crisis continues to be a priority for this government. Last year's total annual investment was over \$145 million to the sector. Currently, Ontario funds 207 agencies designed to assist women experiencing violence. We fund agencies that provide crucial services like emergency shelter, counselling, and transition and housing supports.

More recently, announced as part of the 2014 budget, our government is dedicating an additional \$14.5 million over three years to support the hard-working front-line workers at these agencies that serve the violence against women sector. Let's not forget, both opposition parties voted against additional investments in violence against women services. Our government is committed to reducing violence and supporting women until there's no longer a need.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It concerns the 2013 ice storms and the municipalities that are still without help after almost a year of waiting and endless red tape.

Last week, I asked how much money was going to consulting fees that should be going to municipalities. The minister didn't answer. Instead he talked about training sessions to help municipalities fill out paperwork. The minister stated that all training sessions "were done internally by ministry staff," but an email from his ministry says that, in fact, the training sessions are being conducted by the outside firm LandLink Consulting. Would the minister care to correct his statement?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: LandLink is a disaster claims processing firm that has done work in British Columbia, Alberta and elsewhere—work that has been very well received. The work they're doing is designed to expedite

the claims process. We don't have staff sitting over in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing waiting to respond to the next disaster. When disasters hit us, we pull together a team to manage our response to that.

Now on the red tape side, let me just say this—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Let me say this on red tape: The single most important reason we're being so careful about the accounting and all the specific receipts here is because of the federal requirements on the cost-sharing program. They have very stringent requirements. When you were in government—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister will take a seat when I stand.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I didn't see you stand. Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not my responsibility, and I don't need rebuttal.

Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: That doesn't explain why the government hired LandLink Consulting in the first place.

The Alberta government put LandLink in charge of disaster claims from last year's flood, but eight months after the flood many were still waiting for help. In response, Alberta overhauled their disaster relief system, put the government back in charge and cut ties to LandLink. Alberta fired LandLink when they were unable to handle that province's flood claims. But here in Ontario the minister is still making excuses.

Minister, how much did we pay the Alberta consultants to come running east, straight into the open arms of the Liberals?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We're very aware that municipalities are anxious to support the cost that they incurred to keep their communities safe. LandLink was, in fact, the successful vendor in a competitive procurement process that was open to all bidders across North America.

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: They're not consultants; they're accountants who are helping to process the specific claims that municipalities need to make and—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, they're not consultants; they're accountants.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Please finish.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: You know, Mr. Speaker, we're being so careful about this because the accountability provisions—which we normally get asked about on the other side of the House—are so stringent with the feds. In a previous incarnation, a government responded to a similar situation, shovelled money out the door without any accountability, and when they applied to the feds to get it back, were rejected.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. In 2012, Canadian Solar was granted a FIT contract in Temiskaming Shores. They subcontracted to another company, which then subcontracted to local contractors in my area. Now that project has been sold to TransCanada Energy.

So Canadian Solar made money, TransCanada Energy is making money, but who didn't make money is the local contractors who are out \$21 million.

I alerted the Minister of Energy with a letter in February as this was happening. Why I'm directing this to the Premier is because my constituents have noticed of late that the Premier mentions my letter quite a bit in the Legislature, so they know that she is aware of this issue and they're wondering why she hasn't acted. Aurele and April Miron wrote the Premier a letter. They're wondering. Steve and Jenny Nychuk are wondering. Why haven't you acted—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, I want to thank the member for the question. I will undertake to look into this issue more carefully and get back to him. But in terms of a general response, we have a contracting process, a procurement process. We award the contracts, and those contracts are signable. Throughout the whole FIT program, from time to time, contracts are transferred from one entity to the other.

I certainly will look into this particular issue. I certainly would have some concern about the local contractors who have not been paid, and I will get back to the member.

VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to welcome four of my constituents who are here with the Young Professionals Network: Orlando Spicer, Lee Sample, Christopher Hum and Colin Thain. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I apologize; I was welcoming a class during introductions, and there are four special groups here today I'd just like to mention, if I may.

First of all, St. Patrick Catholic elementary school, under teacher Michelle Hickley; St. Isaac Jogues Catholic elementary school in Pickering—of course, St. Patrick is in Ajax; and our Pickering firefighters, under president of the association Colin Arnott, and Ajax firefighters, under president Mark Somerville. Welcome all of them.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I'd like to correct my record. The \$2 service fee that I referenced in response to the question from the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London will apply to each chargeable product related to hunting and fishing. This fee will allow additional funds

from the sale of the licences to go directly to essential fish and wildlife management programs.

VISITORS

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On a point of order: I wasn't here earlier in the meeting. I would like to welcome to this House the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and their wonderful executive, Carmen Santoro.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I know we've been thanking and welcoming our first responders here today, but I just wanted to thank one of those members, not only as a responder but as a constituent of mine. I'd like to welcome Ernie Thorne here to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On that topic, I'm going to ask all members—we have tried to design a system that does the introductions at an appropriate time. I've been quite lenient in trying to make sure that you have enough time, even past the five-minute mark, in order to introduce all of your guests. If you know they're coming and they're coming late, make mention of them during that time period so that they can at least be on the record and you can indicate that you appreciate their presence here. These kinds of things are just prolonging the House. We've tried to organize an opportunity for us not to do that.

Do your best, please. I'd appreciate it very much.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Wellington–Halton Hills has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let me try that—has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning the announcement in Perth–Wellington. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la

modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 5, Mr. Hoskins moved second reading of Bill 21.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Kiwała, Sophie	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Del Duca, Steven	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Vanhof, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Elliott, Christine	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McGarry, Kathryn	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza	
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 25, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to welcome, in the Speaker's gallery today—and I'm sure you'll be recognizing them more formally shortly—from the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Chief Kirby Whiteduck and Councillor Dan Kohoko. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Anyone else want to steal my thunder?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was going to say, Speaker, that I will reserve thanking and welcoming people until you've done it.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to introduce two amazing, life-saving heroes from the Windsor Professional Firefighters Association who are here this afternoon: Andre Gingras and Wayne Currie, both executive members of the Windsor firefighters' association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: A great pleasure to introduce representatives from the Trillium Gift of Life Network here today. We have Adam Lemm and Ronnie Gavsie. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to introduce Margo Duncan and Denny Timm. Margo Duncan is the executive assistant to Paul Miller in Hamilton—East Stoney Creek, and Denny Timm is my legislative assistant. I'll have more to say about both of them during members' statements.

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, I'll only steal part of your thunder, because I did want to welcome, from Parry Sound—Muskoka, Chief Wayne Pamajewon from Shawanaga First Nation and Chief Denise Restoule from Dokis First Nation, who are here visiting today in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? Okay, let's put the thunder back where it belongs.

Today in the Speaker's gallery we have joining us—welcoming a delegation from across Ontario—First Nations representatives. We have grand chiefs, chiefs, councillors, youth, and Regional Chief Stan Beardy, the Political Confederacy of the Chiefs of Ontario, and First Nations leaders who have journeyed across this great province to be with us today. We welcome all of our chiefs and representatives of First Nations to be here today.

The member from Timmins—James Bay to rehash what I already talked about.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, I didn't want to steal your thunder. I wanted to wait for you to do what you had asked us to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You get some extra chips.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Good. I'm always trying to get in good with the Speaker.

I want to welcome here Norm Hardisty, the chief of Moose Cree First Nation, a good friend and a strong advocate for the people of James Bay and for the Moose Cree. I know that there are a whole bunch of other people here. Your names are there, but if I do that we'll be here till tomorrow morning. All of you are welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In fairness, I will entertain anyone that has visitors that are individual in the delegation if you'd like to introduce them.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: I have a statement that I'm going to make later on, but I will just say collectively, as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, to all of the chiefs, all of the councillors, all of the grand chiefs: Welcome to the Ontario Legislature. I say that on behalf of our government; I say that on behalf of Premier Wynne also. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements? The member for York Centre.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BOMBER COMMAND BAR AWARDS

Mrs. Julia Munro: This past Sunday I had the honour to attend the Bomber Command Bar awards of the Royal Canadian Air Force Georgina Wing 429 meeting in Pefferlaw. Today, I would like to again congratulate the seven veterans and their families who received the award: Larry Mennell, Frank Ferguson, Owen Slingerland, Art Westgarth, Lloyd Bell, Hilliard Dean and Ab Wallace.

The Bomber Command Bar recognizes commitment and bravery in the face of some of the most difficult odds of the Second World War. Despite great risk, thousands volunteered. Almost half of all aircrew never made it to the end of their tour.

I thank the Georgina Wing 429 for allowing me to be a part of this special and meaningful ceremony. We are grateful for the service of these veterans and we will always remember and honour their courage and sacrifice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member and I apologize to the member. It's York—Simcoe, not York Centre. I apologize.

The member from Windsor—Tecumseh.

MARGO DUNCAN AND DENNY TIMM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to take a minute today to say goodbye to two of our NDP staff who are in the gallery today. Margo Duncan started here back in 2002 with Michael Prue. She then worked for Paul Ferreira when he was elected, and for the past seven years she has put up with the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Paul Miller.

I can say that, Speaker, because Mr. Miller is away this week. He is walking one of his daughters down the aisle and calling us every day to see what he is missing and to make sure to give us advice on how to hold the government to account. So I'm trying to one-up him while he is away by jumping in front of the line to say the first public farewell to Margo. She has four grandsons, ranging in age from seven weeks to 13 years, and they will become her priority in the weeks, months and years ahead.

I also want to pay tribute today to the best legislative assistant I've ever had—okay, he's the only one I've ever had. But Denny Timm is leaving at the end of the week for a much better-paying job at the town of Ajax, an

amazing opportunity for him. Denny's career path has always been in the municipal sector. I've known him since he was a kid. I convinced him to put his career on hold for a year to help me set up my office here at Queen's Park and put in place a filing and protocol system that even I could understand, and he has done an outstanding job.

Denny is a former chair of Windsor's youth advisory committee at the city of Windsor, former board member at Transit Windsor and at the Windsor Public Library. I hired him away from the city of Thunder Bay, where he was a management intern; and I know the town of Ajax will benefit from his enthusiasm, his energy and his knowledge, and the experience he gained from working here within the provincial legislative system.

To both, I say I'm sorry to see you go. Happy trails and please stay in touch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You notice I did give you some extra time because of the Hamilton East–Stoney Creek reference.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Which is out of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have his back, so leave him alone. He's a nice guy.

The member from Etobicoke Centre.

SILVER CREEK PARK

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, as MPPs, we're all here to serve our respective communities, but I today would like to highlight the work of a group of parents who are doing a wonderful job of serving my community of Etobicoke Centre. Earlier this fall, I got a first-hand look at the power of community organizing by attending the Silver Creek Park Rejuvenation Project Family Fun Day, organized by a dedicated group of parents in Etobicoke Centre.

Silver Creek Park is located in the heart of my riding between Kipling and Islington, north of Eglinton, and like many parks provides an important gathering place for families and their children, promotes health and wellness, and provides an accessible leisure space for people of all incomes. The park is adjacent to a community pool, a baseball diamond, a tennis court, a soccer field and, of course, the Etobicoke Children's Centre for mental health—a very important park.

Unfortunately, the play structures need to be renewed and made safer; and the park could benefit from paths, benches and landscaping. A group of parents formed the Silver Creek rejuvenation committee to raise the money needed to do those improvements, and they've successfully raised almost \$120,000 already, Mr. Speaker. Anyone interested in supporting the cause can go to silvercreekpark.ca.

The committee was formed by members of the local neighbourhood who, despite busy schedules, continue to volunteer their free time for this important cause. I'd like to thank them for their hard work. I'd like to congratulate them for their hard work and all they've done for the community. These families reflect the best of what our province has to offer: collaborative spirit that produces

results for all of our benefit, and particularly in this case for Etobicoke Centre.

I look forward to supporting the committee. I wish the committee and other project volunteers the very best as they work toward their goal.

AMARANTH TRANSFORMER STATION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today I want to share excerpts from a letter written by Mr. Ted Whitworth, who has been well served by my seatmate and colleague the member from Dufferin–Caledon. But enough is enough, Speaker, and I think people in this House need to hear what he is actually experiencing.

It goes like this:

"We have lived beside the Amaranth transformer station for almost nine years and have had our family, our farm and our lives ruined. We have asked for help and have been promised many times" by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change "that they were going to take action, but now they say what is happening to us is not their responsibility."

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This ministry "has met with us many times but have not carried out the promises made to us. We have reported our issues to the spills centre over 200 times with no results.... How many times should we report issues before we can expect something to be done?"

"Our house by MOECC measurement is 490 metres from the transformer station. Our line fence, where our cattle are, is about 150 metres. Our livestock suffers" with regard to milk production and conception and we suffer as well. "Our doctor, a former medical officer of health, says we should not live in our house. MOE would not look at his letter for a year and a half."

Speaker, enough is enough. I stand here today on behalf of the Whitworths, and I will make this pledge to them. I'll be following up with a letter to both the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to request a response to the inquiries put forth multiple times over the past few years by the Whitworths.

This is a life-altering issue, and this government must address it.

REGION OF PEEL

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I rose in the House previously to mention this issue, and I'd like to raise this issue once again. Peel region has seen some of the most rapid growth in the entire province. Currently, there are 1.3 million people who live in Peel region. This is 11% of the population of Ontario. Some 27,000 new residents each year make the region of Peel their home.

However, the funding formulas have not changed to keep up with this high-growth area. The funding formula does not take into consideration the fact that Peel region has grown so astronomically, particularly when compared to other regions around the province. This government has done very little to address this problem.

This is a serious issue. It impacts people not only in health care, not only in children's issues and in the education sector, but all sectors where funding is a matter in the Peel region. For example, Toronto has 32 community health centres, which are phenomenal places of care; Windsor and London have six; Peel region has only three. Community legal clinics: Peel is a region that is so understaffed and underserved when it comes to community legal services. They have 16 staff, compared to Toronto, which has 109. Peel residents deserve access to justice. This is a serious issue, where if we look at housing, 12,600 families are waiting for affordable housing. Daycare: There's a recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives which has found that daycare is the least expensive in Brampton.

We need this government to take action on a fair share for Peel.

COLLEGES

Mr. Han Dong: Today, I rise in this House to congratulate Colleges Ontario on yet another successful colleges day held here in the Legislature yesterday, November 25. I'm sure the members, like the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, were left with fond memories of delicious samples of food that students prepared for us. But what we really ought to recognize is the important role that colleges play in preparing students with the necessary skills for jobs in today's global economy. I know our Premier and the Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities, the Honourable Reza Moridi, recognize this important role that the colleges play. They are indeed key contributors to their local economy, building communities and their people from the ground up.

Congratulations to all 24 members of the association, to Linda Franklin and to their chair, David Agnew, on a successful day. I look forward to working with them to continue building a better, more prosperous and more competitive Ontario.

HISTORY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Mr. Bill Walker: Two history teachers from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound were bestowed on November 3 with the 2014 History Award for Excellence in Teaching by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, the Governor General of Canada.

David Alexander and Ryan McManaman from the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute won this prestigious prize after taking a unique and exciting approach to teaching their students about the First and Second World Wars. Messrs. Alexander and McManaman brought history to life when they assigned their students individual profiles of Canadian soldiers who died in the world wars, some of whom were themselves OSCVI students at one time.

The students researched and studied a treasure trove of letters written to former OSCVI student Minnie Wright

by soldiers who served and sacrificed during the Great War.

The students also researched 54 Canadian servicemen who were killed on June 6, 1944, particularly those from the Owen Sound area. A final highlight came when a Canadian Forces CC-130 Hercules from RCAF 424 Squadron made a memorial flyover of the school after students researched the lives of two former students who died tragically together while serving in the same Lancaster aircrew. The result of these clever projects, entitled the War and Memory Legacy Project, is a permanent collection of information that future students can learn from and add to.

I would also like to recognize Holly Berner of Meaford, who was recently recognized for her project entitled *Aboriginal Heroes: Influencing Our Youth*, by the Government of Canada History Awards. These awards are Canada's top honours in the field of history and heritage.

The OSCVI and Georgian Bay Secondary School are tremendously fortunate to have these exceptional teachers who are not only passionate about their subject but who also work diligently to challenge and inspire their students. I want to commend Messrs. Alexander and McManaman and Ms. Berner for showing true commitment, love and dedication to teaching and wish them the best in the future.

PAT QUINN

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to say a few words about the passing of the Big Irishman, Pat Quinn. As you know, Pat passed away this week after an incredible career. I remember I first saw him when I was at St. Mike's as a student and he was playing for the Hamilton Tiger Cubs. It was a long time ago.

Pat has been an incredible success. He's been a lawyer; he's got a law degree. He has been a general manager with Vancouver, coached with Edmonton, Philadelphia Flyers, and with the Leafs. He was one of the best coaches we've ever had. We used to win when Pat was here in Toronto.

You know about Pat. He was always respected by all his players, all his fellow professionals. He always had his heart in the right place. He was a man of great strength, and although Bobby Orr doesn't have too many good memories about that hit, we remember that hit.

Anyway, Pat was an incredible role model for everybody in hockey. The thing that we remember most about Pat is that he led Canada to the gold medal in Salt Lake City in 2002, the first time we won that gold medal in 50 years. Pat was the leader of that team in Salt Lake City.

The last thing I'll say about Pat—it shows you the kind of guy he was—the only time people have ever seen him cry in public was when, in Salt Lake City, the Canadian women's hockey team won the gold medal and beat the Americans in that game. Pat was shedding tears of joy for the great Canadian women's hockey team.

So we say to Pat, I hope you were in heaven a half-hour before the devil knew you were dead.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd like to take this moment to discuss a very important health care issue that most of us rarely think about: organ and tissue donation.

But first, I'd like to recognize again—we have Ronnie Gavsie and Adam Lemm in the gallery. They're with the Trillium Gift of Life Network. The Trillium Gift of Life Network plans, promotes, coordinates and supports organ and tissue donation and transplants across Ontario. Its mission is to save and enhance lives through the gift of organ and tissue donation and transplants.

Now, most of us are lucky enough not to have to think about it. However, for the over 1,500 Ontarians currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, this issue is a daily reality, and many of them live right here in Toronto.

It's astounding to think that a single person who dies prematurely can save the lives of up to eight people through the gift of organ donation and significantly enhance the lives of 75 others through tissue donation. Yet despite these life-saving benefits to recipients, most Torontonians are not answering the call. Province-wide, about 26% of Ontarians have signed up for the Trillium Gift of Life Network, but only 17% of Toronto residents. I'm proud to share and say that in Beaches–East York, we're at the leading edge of the GTA, with about 25% of our residents having signed up. But that number is not enough.

The fact is that there is a chronic shortage that needs to be addressed. People, if they are 16 years of age, can go onto the website beadonor.ca and sign up. I've done it, and I hope you all do too.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to clarify. In my statement, I may have said that child care was the least expensive, and I meant to say “least affordable” in Brampton as compared to all of Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. All members are allowed to correct their record.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESTORING PLANNING POWERS TO MUNICIPALITIES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RÉTABLISSEMENT DES POUVOIRS DES MUNICIPALITÉS EN MATIÈRE D'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to amend the Planning Act / Projet de loi 48, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jim Wilson: This bill aims to amend the Planning Act to restore the municipal planning authority that existed prior to the Green Energy Act. The Green Energy Act exempted renewable energy projects from the municipal process. This bill will give municipalities back the control to make land-use decisions they have traditionally been allowed to make.

With the municipal election over and the formation of new councils across the province, I thought it imperative to reintroduce this legislation, as many of the new council members may not be aware of it.

ONTARIO IMMIGRATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'IMMIGRATION EN ONTARIO

Mr. Chan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 49, Loi portant sur l'immigration en Ontario et apportant une modification connexe à la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Michael Chan: Today, we are introducing the Ontario Immigration Act. This proposed legislation will help us achieve three goals. First, it will facilitate Ontario's work with the federal government on recruitment, selection and admission of skilled immigrants. Secondly, it will help strengthen our ongoing efforts to reduce fraud and detect misrepresentation; it will help protect the integrity of our immigration selection program and improve accountability. Finally, it will increase transparency and enhance information-sharing with our immigration partners.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I move that Mr. Mantha replace Mr. Cimino on the membership of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General moves that Mr. Mantha replace Mr. Cimino on the membership of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Do we agree? Agreed and carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ABORIGINAL AND TREATY RIGHTS

Hon. David Zimmer: I rise in the Legislature today—on Treaty 13 land and the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit—to speak to the importance of treaties and the treaty relationship between the province and treaty partners.

I would like to recognize some of the people in the gallery here today and their tireless work to promote a better understanding of treaties to this Legislature and indeed to all Ontarians. However, noticeably absent, sadly absent, is the late Grand Chief Stan Louttit, who passed away in June. Grand Chief Louttit was a staunch advocate for inherent and treaty rights throughout his 20-year political career. Grand Chief Louttit was an exceptional leader who will always be remembered for his dedication to improving the lives of the Mushkegowuk people living in northern Ontario.

Speaker, treaties and related agreements were made in Ontario throughout the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. They are still a part of what we do today. For instance, an agreement is currently being negotiated with the Algonquins of Ontario today, in the 21st century.

Treaties reflect the historic reality that First Nations were the original people and occupants of the land, and that they were never conquered. They represent solemn agreements to live together on this land through the formal exchange of promises that created rights and responsibilities for Canada, for Ontario and for First Nations. They formalize a relationship between the crown and the First Nations signatories based on the principles of trust and mutual respect, and were meant to be lasting and meaningful agreements.

Métis played a significant role in the province's treaty history, acting as facilitators and interpreters during some of the treaty negotiations between First Nations and the crown. In addition, Métis historically received annuities under some treaties, and in one instance signed a treaty adhesion.

Ontario's commitment to treaties is profound and is a public commitment, and it will remain a public commitment. Since 2005, we've been happy to convey that we respect aboriginal and treaty rights protected by section 35 of the Constitution Act, passed in 1982. We are committed, and we remain committed, to meeting the prov-

ince's constitutional and other legal obligations in respect of aboriginal people. The province and all Ontarians benefit from these treaties, and we must recognize our obligations under them.

If I can be frank, the crown has not always upheld its obligations under the treaties. There are many historical examples when crown governments, including Ontario, did not consider treaty rights when making decisions. This created a strain on our relationships with First Nations. It communicated a lack of respect to our treaty partners.

Today, we are taking steps to address the legacies of these unfortunate actions and attitudes. On behalf of the province, I affirm this government's commitment to work with our treaty partners. For example, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is working closely with aboriginal partners on an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy that aims to do two things: increase the availability of culturally appropriate services, and enhance community control over service design and delivery. Together, through a respectful and meaningful dialogue, we will continue to come to better understandings about different perspectives on treaties, and we will work together on practical initiatives that support a strong treaty relationship.

An important foundation for all of this work is greater public awareness. Initiatives such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have led the way in shedding light on the darker episodes of our shared history. Most Ontarians are unfamiliar with the province's treaty history. To begin to rectify this, we distributed the First Nations and Treaties map of Ontario to every public elementary and high school in the province, to begin raising awareness about treaties and our shared histories. We included with that map an instruction to the schools to set up a series of lectures and talks about what the map represented, what the map meant and what treaties are all about in Ontario. This is the first map of treaties published by the government since the 1940s, some 70 years ago.

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We also plan to work with our First Nation partners to develop treaties-related curriculum materials, to help ensure that all Ontario students have a better understanding of First Nation communities, cultures and perspectives.

We launched a social media campaign on treaties that has quickly reached more than a million readers and continues to grow every day.

Today, I am proud to announce that we will be working with our partners on a motion to establish an annual treaties awareness day here in Ontario, to be held every year to promote awareness of treaties and the treaty relationship, particularly among students but also among all Ontarians. We will work with our treaty partners to identify a day to designate as the treaties awareness day, and I look forward to those discussions with the visitors in the Speaker's gallery.

Treaties are the reason that Canada and Ontario exist as we know them today. Treaties were foundational for

the development of this country, and treaties allow us to continue to live and work together in Ontario. As such, newcomers to Canada owe as much to the treaties as the descendants of the early settlers.

Ontario will continue to build a strong partnership based on mutual respect and fairness and a sensitivity to past difficulties.

Meegwetich, and thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mr. Norm Miller: Once again, let me welcome our many visitors in the Speaker's gallery, and other visitors—the grand chiefs and chiefs and others—who are here today.

I rise in this House today in recognition and in support of the proposed Ontario treaty awareness day.

Ontario as a province, just as Canada as a nation, was founded on treaties. Treaties are an integral aspect that lay at the core of the relationship between First Nations, provinces and the government of Canada. With 46 treaties and other land agreements covering Ontario, I feel raising awareness is very important.

I believe that it is significant to note as well that a number of these agreements signed between First Nations and the crown predate both the current boundaries of Ontario as well as the birth of Canada as a nation.

Last year, I was also very pleased to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the royal proclamation here in the provincial Legislature. While the royal proclamation is not a traditional treaty, it served to lay the groundwork for subsequent agreements by recognizing aboriginal rights and setting the guidelines for future treaties between settlers and First Nations.

In 2005, I was fortunate enough to attend the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the signing of James Bay Treaty 9, held on Lake St. Joseph, the location of an historic Hudson's Bay trading post.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the member from Timmins—James Bay is probably the next speaker, and he and I both fly. I flew myself up to that celebration. I thought I was going south, not north, because when I checked the weather forecast, the temperature said it was going to be 36 degrees in the Pickle Lake-Mishkeegogamang area. I thought I must be wrong at first, but it turned out it was exactly correct. It was probably the hottest weather I've ever experienced, and almost as far north as I'd been.

I was pleased, at that celebration, that Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman was also in attendance. Of course, he is of First Nations descent as well, and comes from Parry Sound—Muskoka, from the Port Carling area, so that was a nice part of it.

Then-Grand Chief Stan Beardy, from Nishnawbe Aski Nation was there. He is now Regional Chief Stan Beardy. In fact, I have a picture of him and I and the Lieutenant Governor in my office here at Queen's Park.

As a side note, I should say that I had the pleasure of being then-Grand Chief Stan Beardy's guest when he took the then-leader of the PC Party John Tory and myself up to Fort Severn and to Webequie to get a better

understanding of those communities, and both the huge challenges and the opportunities in those communities.

August 2014 marked the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara. I believe these anniversaries are also tremendous opportunities to raise awareness and understanding about how treaties have shaped regions of our province and our history.

I am fortunate to have seven individual First Nations in Parry Sound—Muskoka. I'm pleased to see the chief of Dokis First Nation, Denise Restoule, whom I introduced earlier, as well as the chief of Shawanaga First Nation, Wayne Pamajewon, here in the Legislature today.

Treaties are pacts. These bonds, made between First Nations and the crown, are in the spirit of working together for mutual benefit. The specific protection of lands and the preservation of hunting and fishing rights cannot be emphasized enough. As was mentioned by the minister, the Métis played an important part in the process of facilitating the treaties.

I feel it is also important to note that the treaty process continues today in discussions that could lead to Ontario's first modern-day constitutionally protected treaty. Treaty rights are protected under section 35 of the Constitution of 1982. I believe that raising awareness about the significance of treaties in Ontario and Canada is very important.

Meegwetich. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I can't say that I'm particularly pleased today to speak to this particular initiative, because I represent the people of James Bay. Many of you have heard me, over the years in this place, bring various chiefs and citizens down from James Bay to talk about the deplorable conditions in those communities and the lack of action by both levels of government, federal and provincial. I wonder: Great, we're going to have a Treaty Awareness Day, but what's that going to do for the young child growing up in Attawapiskat, Peawanuck, Kashechewan, Big Trout Lake or any of those communities, living in houses where you're 20 or 25 people in a house and the house is substandard, the house is cold? There's non-potable water in 80% of our communities. Education is failing these children.

We, who signed Treaty 9—yes, the province of Ontario—I want to say this is my treaty. This Treaty 9 belongs to me. It belongs to you. It belongs to the First Nations members of Treaty 9. But what have we done to honour this treaty?

The person who probably most affected me in understanding what the gist of the treaty was about was Stan Louttit. It was mentioned by the minister—and I give him some credit for that—that when the forefathers of Stan Louttit and others signed the treaty, they thought that, yes, we were going to share the bounties of this land, and we were not only going to share the bounties of the land, being hydro, being mining, being forestry, and give economic activity to First Nations as well, but we would also live up to our agreement of making sure that, as far as access to services, First Nations were able to be equal to any other child or any other parent across this province.

What do we have, more than 100 years later? Very little of it. Yes, we can have a day to be aware that we signed the treaties. But unless we're prepared to say, "This is my treaty as well," and unless we're prepared to say, as a Legislature and as members on all sides of this House—this is not just a government issue; this is a responsibility of every one of us in this assembly and every citizen in this province—that there are citizens in this province who are living in worse than third-world conditions, that it is unacceptable that a child should grow up in a house with 20 or 25 other people and go to a school that's a lesser standard than any other school in the province of Ontario; God, if they were in the provincial system, at least maybe we could do something, but there has been no serious discussion on the part of the province to even bring them into that system.

We had to fight—what, Grand Chief?—20 years in order to get a school built in Attawapiskat that was condemned because fuel had leaked underneath the school and the kids were getting sick. It wasn't until the parents said, "That's enough, my kids are coming home sick," that they shut the school down and the federal government decided to maybe do something. Twenty years—where was Ontario in all of that?

We don't have a lot to be proud of. Yes, we should celebrate our victories, because there are a lot of good things that have happened over the last 100 years. But let's not forget that we have a long way to go.

The thing that strikes me—and this is the point of what Stan sort of taught me over the years—is that even though Ontario signed a treaty with the First Nations people and even though we didn't live up to much of what was inside that treaty, First Nations people are still prepared to share. Imagine that. What people, after 100 years of being ignored, would have such generosity as to say, "I'm still prepared to share. I still want to live up to the commitments of that agreement" that we signed in Treaty 9 with the people of the Mushkegowuk area over 100 years ago?

1540

But instead, what we get is governments that pass legislation without the consent or even the discussion with First Nations. Some of you were here when we were doing changes to the Mining Act and the Far North Act. Grand Chief Stan Beardy and other chiefs from across the north came down and said, "Listen, let's sit down and do this right. We want development in the northern part of this province. We want our children to grow up with a chance of having a job and being able to provide for their families, like you and I are able to do, much easier than their parents." Instead, what we did was, we rammed through a piece of legislation without their consent that cut them out. Do we have revenue sharing today? No. Do we have land use planning for First Nations so that they can have a say about their lands and what happens on those lands? No.

So we could decide that we're going to celebrate treaties every year, but until we address the fundamental injustices that we have perpetuated on our First Nations

friends in this province, we're not making the advance that we should.

I make this one plea: This is our treaty. Let us for a change do what First Nations have done for us for 100 years and show the generosity of at least accepting that we have a responsibility in finding solutions to the problems that we find in our communities so that we don't have 80% of communities without potable water, we don't have communities where almost everybody is living in substandard housing, and we don't have communities that don't have adequate education. Let's do what is right. Let's allow them to be full citizens of this province and share in the bounty which this treaty was supposed to provide.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the residents of Clearview township and neighbouring townships, oppose the wpd Canada Fairview wind project on Fairgrounds Road and all wind energy projects in Clearview township; and

"Whereas we support the petition of mayors and councillors from" over "80 municipalities, farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, which petition requested that the province place an immediate moratorium on all wind projects until an independent and comprehensive health study has determined that turbine noise is safe to human health, amongst other things; and

"Whereas wpd Canada's Fairview wind project violates the OLS airspace and usability of registered aerodromes in Clearview, including Collingwood Regional Airport and Stayner field, and wpd Canada's draft renewable energy approvals reports do not recognize these impacts or the jurisdiction of the government of Canada.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario agree and accept that until the federal health study is completed and federal aeronautical zoning is in place, that it will immediately take whatever action is necessary to give full effect to a moratorium on all wind turbine development in Ontario, including all projects for which final approvals have not been given."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Betty Schneider from the Stayner area for sending me this petition. I know it's a bit old, but it's still as meaningful as ever.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Vic Dhillon: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

"Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

"Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults battling this catastrophic disease;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients of atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I have signed this petition and I will forward this to the desk with my favourite page, Tyler, who is from the wonderful riding of Brampton West.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on population-based legal services funding, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Noah.

HOSPICE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario; and

"Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and among the lowest-funded in the province, even though it serves as many clients or more

than other hospices that receive greater provincial support; and

"Whereas Matthews House has been told by the Central LHIN that LHINs do not fund residential hospice operational costs and yet hospices in other LHINs, including Barrie, Huntsville, Richmond Hill, Owen Sound and now Collingwood, all receive operational funding from the province; and

"Whereas in February 2010 Matthews House Hospice was promised a solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN which has never materialized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Wynne government immediately develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with hospice funding to ensure that people in south Simcoe and all Ontarians receive equal access to end-of-life care."

I agree with this petition. I want to thank the Alliston family physicians medical practice for sending it to me.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is on population-based legal services funding.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure that Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I will put my name to this and give this to our page Albany.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approval; and

"Whereas this Liberal mismanagement of the energy file has resulted in the ministry paying wind turbine providers not to produce electricity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments, and that the Minister of the Environment conduct a thorough scientific study on the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Mikaila.

1550

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition, and give it to page Claudia to deliver to the table.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families

to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

It will be a pleasure for me to affix my signature.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here signed by many people from Ingersoll, Woodstock, Dorchester, Thamesford and London, and they all feel the same way.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990, c. E.19, s. 3.; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem,'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

I thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I'll affix my signature to it.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

“(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

“(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario.”

I couldn't agree more with this petition. I affix my name to it and give it to page Ethan to take to the table.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Nick.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I will be bringing 3,600 copies of these petitions.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

“Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

“Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

“Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

“We, the undersigned, do not support implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and petition the government of Ontario to axe the pension plan.”

Speaker, I'll be delivering the 3,600 signed petitions from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I'll sign my name and give this to page Jenny.

OPPOSITION DAY

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ms. Laurie Scott: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature should make it clear that sexual harassment will not be tolerated as it violates our fundamental values and that our culture is at a turning point—by acting now, and supporting this important dialogue, we can catalyze change and build a safer and more equitable workplace environment for current and future generations; and, that a select committee should be established no later than December 4, 2014, to make recommendations on combating sexual harassment in the workplace and protecting victims from further harm; and

That in developing its recommendations, the committee shall focus on the following issues: (1) why people, mainly women, are reluctant to report incidents of harassment in workplaces across Ontario; (2) why victims fear that they will be ostracized, that they will suffer professionally, and most of all, why they fear that they will not be believed; and (3) preventing the further victimization from occurring after the harassment or assault with the unjust treatment of the victims and a chronic failure to hold perpetrators to account.

As such, this committee will be comprised of two members from each of the recognized parties, and that the committee have the ability to conduct their meetings in camera, to ensure that women feel supported and can maintain anonymity as they share their stories. Furthermore, the committee should hear from experts, then make recommendations regarding the development of best practices to prevent sexual harassment and, when it occurs, to address it in a way which supports and respects the victims; and

That the committee shall have the authority to conduct province-wide hearings and undertake research, and generally shall have such powers and duties as are required to develop recommendations on a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual harassment in the workplace and protect victims of sexual harassment from further harm; and

That the committee shall present an interim report to the House no later than June 4, 2015, and a final report no later than October 29, 2015.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Scott has moved opposition day motion number 4. Ms. Scott.

Ms. Laurie Scott: In the last month, the issue of sexual harassment has taken an unaccustomed place in the spotlight. I first addressed the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace on November 3, after sexual misconduct allegations involving a former CBC host, Jian Ghomeshi, were brought to public attention. These allegations included situations where co-workers raised concerns with their superiors and no apparent action was taken. As the Ghomeshi allegations unfolded, and which have now led to five charges being laid today, the Twitter hashtag #BeenRapedNeverReported became an online phenomenon, with thousands of women worldwide sharing their stories of sexual assault whilst highlighting the challenges around reporting sexual violence.

In July, my colleague the member from Dufferin-Caledon and critic for the Attorney General brought to light the issue about an assistant crown attorney in the Peel region. Rather than investigate a complaint of workplace harassment made against that assistant crown attorney, the government's Attorney General allowed him to resign and gave him a one-year salary bonus of \$180,000. Clearly, someone in the government had to sign off on that decision and did not follow the government's own harassment policies that are in place. These policies mean little if they are being ignored or if victims are afraid of coming forward.

The recent headlines have triggered an outpouring of testimony from victims who say they have endured sexual harassment in their places of work right here in Ontario. A Toronto-born blogger and sociologist, Anita Sarkeesian, has studied the portrayal of women in video games. Her blogs have also resulted in rape and death threats. Last month, Sarkeesian cancelled a guest lecture at the University of Utah following an anonymous threat of a Montreal-style massacre if she was allowed to speak.

In all of these examples, and in many more which haven't been publicly highlighted, people, mainly women, are reluctant to report incidents of harassment for a variety of reasons. They fear that they will be ostracized, that they will suffer professionally, and most of all, they fear that they will not be believed. These fears are absolutely justified, as all of these things do happen in workplaces across the province. This victimizes women doubly, once with the harassment of assault and twice with the unjust treatment of the victims and a chronic failure to hold perpetrators accountable. These have highlighted that many people find the idea of formal complaints or illegal processes to be daunting and, at best, that new approaches may be needed to help remove any real or perceived barriers to justice.

I asked the Premier to take action on addressing these concerns by striking an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace. As stated in this motion, the potential scope of the committee could focus on (1) why people, mainly women, are reluctant to report incidents of harassment in workplaces across Ontario; (2) why victims fear that they will be ostracized

and that they will suffer professionally, and most of all, why they fear they will not be believed; and (3) preventing the further victimization from occurring after the harassment or assault with the unjust treatment of the victims and a chronic failure to hold perpetrators to account.

On Monday, three weeks after my initial request, the Premier responded in a letter sent to party leaders and the media. So while I am pleased to hear that the government will be supporting my motion here today in principle, I do have concerns on how this committee will move forward. I am not opposed if the scope of the committee's mandate were to be expanded more broadly to include sexual violence and harassment, but I think it should be up to the committee to determine the scope of how it proceeds. What I am concerned about is that the government would like this issue handled in a Liberal-dominated legislative standing committee rather than a committee with equal representation from all three parties. That can be done in this Legislature with unanimous consent.

Let me state that this motion is a perfectly reasonable request, as it is the responsibility of this Legislature to make sure that laws and legislation in place are meaningful and as effective as possible.

In fact, the Premier, in response to my initial question, said, "I'm open to having a conversation with the opposition parties about what we might do collectively."

As the Premier even stated in her letter, there is a need to address inequality. That seems near impossible to have when this government is suggesting this discussion take place in a Liberal-dominated legislative standing committee rather than a committee with equal representation from all three parties.

My reasonable request that a select committee be struck to study sexual harassment in the workplace will offer the opportunity for all three parties equally to come together, hear from victims and experts, and begin an open conversation on a topic that has remained in the dark for much too long.

Afterwards, the committee would bring forward a report on what actions should be taken to close the gaps that clearly exist in the current system so we can build a safer and more equitable workplace environment for both current and future generations. Harassment is a non-partisan issue.

It has been 25 years since the landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision defining sexual harassment as a form of discrimination prohibited under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but an estimated 92% of Canadian harassment victims opt against reporting. Of the reported cases, 23% of Canadian women, a total of 2.4 million, have encountered work-related sexual harassment. Some 55% of women who have been sexually harassed at work reported incidents involving a co-worker. Harassment by a boss was reported by 39%, and by a customer by 13%. Ten per cent of all cases brought to the Ontario Human Rights Commission deal with sexual harassment.

Most of the data available on workplace harassment are decades old, dating back to 1993, which I believe underscores the inattention to this issue.

The numbers are just as alarming when it comes to sexual assaults. According to YWCA Canada, there are 460,000 sexual assaults in Canada every year. Only 33 out of every 1,000 sexual assault cases are reported to the police, and 29 are recorded as a crime. These numbers speak volumes about how many assailants walk free and why women may be afraid to press charges against their abusers.

While we have all seen the latest stories plastered across the front page of every magazine and newspaper, the majority of victims yet stay silent, and even most reported crimes rarely make the headlines. Therefore, we don't recognize the true size of this social crisis.

Even though there are still many who are reluctant to come forward, we can still give voice to those who want to share their stories and help raise public consciousness and awareness on this issue. As the elected representatives of Ontario, we believe it is crucial and critical that this House show leadership on this issue. By striking this all-party select committee, the Ontario Legislature can make it clear that we do not accept these acts of sexual harassment because they are violations of our fundamental values.

If this motion passes today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be asking for unanimous consent to strike this select committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of New Democrats to begin our portion of the debate on this very important motion. On days like today, members of this Legislature should take time to reflect, to look beyond these aisles, and to really appreciate the fact that the work we do here has a meaningful impact outside of these walls.

As we speak, hundreds of thousands of women across the province are going about their daily lives, earning a living, and studying at schools and colleges and universities. Some of them, through no fault of their own, of course, will be victimized by sexual harassment and assault. It is happening right now. Right now, a woman in Ontario is being put in a position she doesn't want to be in. She is hearing a comment she didn't ask to hear. She's being touched in a way that she didn't invite. Sexual harassment and sexual assault can come from a co-worker, a boss, an acquaintance, a family member or a complete stranger. It's never right and never deserved.

So I want to commend our opposition colleague MPP Laurie Scott for bringing this important motion before the House today.

1610

New Democrats have long supported the idea of an all-party select committee to examine sexual harassment and violence. Members of this House will remember that my colleague Cheri DiNovo—sorry, Speaker—the member for Parkdale—High Park proposed a similar idea back in 2008 and again in 2010.

I myself tabled two bills in this Legislature, in 2005 and in 2007, to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment and violence in the workplace.

No woman at any time should ever be subject to sexual harassment or assault in the workplace, frankly, or anywhere else. We owe it to our daughters, our sisters, our mothers, our families, our friends, our colleagues and our pages here in the Legislature to do much, much better.

We know the sad facts about sexual harassment: 87% of Canadian women report experiencing sexual harassment, 43% of all Canadian women have been sexually harassed at work, and only 8% of those women feel comfortable enough to report it.

Eight out of 10 female students say they have been sexually assaulted at school. We know the sad facts about sexual assault. Over a third of women have experienced some form of sexual assault in their lives since the age of 16. And 15% of female university students experience sexual assault. Fewer than 10% of sexual assault victims report the crime to the police.

It is important to put a face on these figures. Each number represents a real person, a real human being. Each number represents a real life that has been scarred by unwanted and undesired violence. We can all agree that there's no room in our society for this kind of behaviour.

I want to say, from the Ontario Human Rights Commission website, what exactly sexual harassment is:

"Sexual harassment is a type of discrimination based on sex. When someone is sexually harassed in the workplace, it can undermine their sense of personal dignity. It can prevent them from earning a living, doing their job effectively, or reaching their full potential. Sexual harassment can also poison the environment"—of course, for that person, the victim, but also for other co-workers in that workplace. "If left unchecked, sexual harassment in the workplace has the potential to escalate to violent behaviour.

"Employers that do not take steps to prevent sexual harassment can face major costs in decreased productivity, low morale, increased absenteeism and health care costs," as well as, of course, court costs if things don't get dealt with. "Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, sexual harassment is 'engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome.' In some cases, one incident could be serious enough to be" considered "sexual harassment."

A list of some of the activities that are described on that website:

"—demanding hugs;

"—making unnecessary physical contact, including unwanted touching;

"—using rude or insulting language or making comments toward women (or men, depending on the circumstances);

"—calling people sex-specific derogatory names;

"—making sex-related comments about a person's physical characteristics or actions;

"—saying or doing something because you think a person does not conform to sex-role stereotypes;

"—posting or sharing pornography, sexual pictures or cartoons, sexually explicit graffiti, or other sexual images (including online);

“—making sexual jokes;
“—bragging about sexual prowess.”

I think the members of this Legislature need to review that website and think carefully about their own behaviours and the behaviours that they may observe in other places where we do our business as representatives of the people of this province.

It's interesting to note that sexual harassment happens in every kind of workplace, in every kind of community, in every kind of circumstance. It's not put aside to one place or another.

However, while it does occur everywhere and in all kinds of industries, it is in fact more often occurring in certain types of employment, and I thought it was important to read this one out specifically: “male-dominated work environments (for example, the military, policing, construction work).”

Politics, Speaker, still continues to be a male-dominated work environment, so it's not surprising that many of the things that we've heard coming out over the last number of weeks have come from the very kind of work environment that all of us here share in this Legislature.

Many of us have heard victims' stories in our professional and personal lives. These stories sadden us and they make us angry. They also make us determined to do something to stop these crimes from ever happening again.

We all heard, of course, about the 17-year-old girl in Halifax who committed suicide following a year and a half of abuse over the Internet, after the boys who gang-raped her posted graphic photos of the attack. Ontario is not immune. Young women here are just as vulnerable, just as subject to unwanted harassment and violence, just as likely to suffer in silence. As legislators, it is our responsibility to act. It is our responsibility to prevent reprehensible acts like this from happening. It's our duty to protect the victims. We need to sit down and seriously look at ways to stop this scourge in our communities and throughout the province. We have to work together in order to be able to do that.

I have to say that I was encouraged, at first, when the Premier seemed willing to act, but when I found out that she allowed her House leader to insist on Liberal majority control of the committee charged to investigate the scourge of sexual harassment and assault, it became clear that the Premier would rather put the focus on politics than on people. It's highly, highly disappointing. This issue is too important to be treated like a political football. I wrote the Premier today and I expressed my disappointment. I can't say it strongly enough here in this chamber: Drawing partisan lines around this committee does not serve the victims of these terrible crimes. It will not right outstanding wrongs. It will not correct gender inequality, support aboriginal women, visible minorities and the LGBTQ community. It will not provide an honest and balanced appraisal of government policies and practices. The Liberals must work freely with all parties and all Ontarians and focus on the problems at hand.

New Democrats favour the non-partisan approach of an all-party select committee, and I know that Ms. Scott and our Conservative colleagues do, too. This committee must operate outside of partisan concerns. Thousands of Ontarians have worked hard to come up with solutions that will put an end to all kinds of violence against women. We must listen carefully to the advice of experts and act without delay.

In fact, there are important changes that we can make right now, that the government can make now, such as making it mandatory for all Ontario universities to follow the example of Ontario colleges and create sexual harassment and assault policies, making sure that no doctor who has ever sexually assaulted patients ever returns to medical practice. We can conduct a new, comprehensive survey that accurately measures and tracks incidents of sexual harassment and assault. We can update the sexual education curriculum that addresses Internet-related sexual threats and exploitation. We must also stop the incessant cuts to victims' services and make sure that women aren't turned away when they need help the most. We must be diligent about making sure that recommendations from the Lori Dupont inquest are respected and enforced.

In fact, Speaker, we must remember Lori Dupont, who was killed in 2005 by a doctor, her co-worker, who then took his own life when he was about to be charged with the murder. It took until 2010 for this Legislature to finally act, with legislation on harassment in the workplace—five years. That's a hell of a long time, and I don't believe that legislation functions the way it should. There are obviously not enough tools available to employers to make sure that harassment is stopped in the workplace, because statistics show that, in fact, it continues.

I sat with Barbara Dupont, Lori's mother; I sat with her friends; I sat with her co-workers who had been witnessing the harassment and who had been ignored when the alarm bells were being raised. I sat with the trade union movement activists and women's movement activists in southwestern Ontario, in the Windsor area. They were all pleased to see the legislation finally come forward, but I can tell you that they're probably not pleased today to see yet another Liberal government dragging their feet, playing political games on an issue that is so damn important to women all across this province.

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Speaker, that came in 2005. But back in 1996, another woman was murdered in the workplace, again a situation of ongoing sexual harassment that led to violence and her murder. The woman's name was Theresa Vince. Nothing happened here in Ontario, following up on Theresa Vince's murder. Theresa Vince was a woman who worked at a Sears store. She was an HR expert. She was killed by her boss after sexual harassment in the workplace. Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont are not just numbers on file, and they're not just titles for an inquest.

Time has been wasting in this province for far too long. It's time to strike that all-party select committee so

we can get to work on the issue of eliminating sexual harassment and assault in the workplace and in our communities, throughout our workplaces and throughout our province.

Once again, I am urging the Premier of this province to instruct her House leader to meet with the opposition House leaders immediately to discuss the mandate and terms of reference for an all-party select committee, so that we can go to work on what really matters. In fact, I challenge the Liberals across the way: If they're interested in actually doing something on this issue, support this motion and make sure it passes; get your House leader in this House and make sure he agrees to unanimous consent to support the motion that's before us in this Legislature today. That's the one, single thing that the Liberals can do, and that the MPPs across the way on the other side of this chamber can do.

In closing, I want to say on last thing, and that is that actions speak louder than words. The Premier was very, very disappointing in the actions she took in the letter that was sent by the House leader of her party. It's time to put politics aside and come together to take this issue of sexual harassment and violence against women seriously, once and for all. This is a window of opportunity because of the heightened awareness around this province of this issue. Shame on us, and shame on the government if they don't take advantage of it and do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for Hamilton Centre and leader of the third party.

Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And women's issues, Speaker, if I may add.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Forgive me. Yes, and women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Important to this debate. Thank you.

I am very pleased to speak on this motion from the MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. She is a wonderful colleague who shares representation of Durham region, or at least part of it, the Brock piece of her riding. I do enjoy working with her, and I have the utmost respect for her as well. I know she works very hard for her constituents.

Just picking up where the leader of the third party left off, on Monday morning the Premier did write to the opposition leaders on this opposition day motion. She expressed strong support for a process that would see MPPs from all parties travel across Ontario and engage directly with women and men.

I want to emphasize that, going forward, we can't leave men out of this discussion. We need to hear from women. We know there's a preponderance of sexual assault and violence against women. But men have an importance voice here. Men and women need to help us shed light on the important issues of sexual assault and harassment. We believe the PC proposal is a very good

start, and we support it in principle, as the Premier has communicated.

But what is before us—the motion as written—is a limited select committee with a narrow and limited mandate. In our view, more work needs to be done to improve on the proposal. The Premier has challenged us to do a couple of things. One is to broaden that mandate to include sexual violence and harassment outside the workplace; and second, to incorporate the voices of those most affected by sexual harassment and assault, and include the voices of young people, aboriginal women, visible minorities and voices from the LGBT communities.

The leader of the third party just spoke about the importance of hearing from students and their experiences with respect to sexual harassment, poisoned environments and sexual violence. She spoke about the medical profession. I'm very pleased to see that the leader of the third party talked about, I think, support for a broader mandate. I think we can all agree that it's important we get this right.

As I have spoken about here in the House and outside the House, if we're going to make this kind of investment, it is extremely important we get this right. It's important that we be as inclusive as possible because this is a very large and serious issue.

Our House leader, the government House leader, wrote to his counterparts in order to continue the discussion, so we are moving on things. We don't want to see political football being played here at all. That's not at all what the government intends to do, and we don't want wedges to be driven on this very, very important issue.

I do have to point out that we operate within the confines of what we call standing orders, the rules of the Legislature, and standing order 113 clearly states that memberships of a standing or select committee "shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House."

Both the PCs and the NDP agreed, as recently as July, that committees of our Legislature are to reflect the proportions of the recognized parties in the House, reflecting the will of the people of Ontario. We've all been democratically elected by our constituents. The democratic constitution of a select committee, or any other committee, is the only reasonable and fair option.

As the Premier has said, this committee is not about writing another set of protocols. We don't want to get bogged down just doing that. We don't want it to be a piece of paper on an office wall somewhere. We are dealing with cultural norms within organizations, within workplaces, within post-secondary institutions and beyond. Those cultural norms need to be shifted.

Again, to echo the Premier, it's pivotal that we have as many voices as possible. It isn't about a political exercise and it's not about one party trying to get the upper hand over the other; it's about democracy, and it's very important that we get the scope and the mandate right on this. I am very hopeful that all of our House leaders will work co-operatively to make that happen.

As the minister responsible for women's issues, I have a very strong interest in the creation of a wide-ranging, all-party committee to examine sexual assault and harassment within the workplace and beyond. You only have to read the media to see that it extends well beyond the workplace. This is not a new issue. There has been heightened focus on it with recent events, but it's not a new issue.

The Premier has made it a key role for the Ontario Women's Directorate and this government to work to end violence against women. This is something that was put in my mandate before recent media events. We have always felt that this was a very important issue. We want Ontario to be a province where all women and men live free from the threat, fear or experience of violence or harassment. It is a priority of the Ontario Women's Directorate to promote gender equality in Ontario and ensure that every person who identifies as a woman or girl or other group is able to fully participate as a full member of society, exercising their rights and enjoyment for fundamental freedoms in the social, economic and civil life of this province.

In 2009, our government was the first to bring changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address violence against women and other groups, in response to any form of workplace harassment. This requires employers to have workplace violence and workplace harassment policies, and programs in place to implement them.

In 2011, we launched a \$15-million, four-year sexual violence action plan and have extended this funding for an additional two years. We continue to call upon the federal government to support the call for a public inquiry in response to the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of the severity of this issue.

Just yesterday, my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services announced a \$14.5-million investment over three years to women's shelters. Again, this is a program that has been in the works for some time.

On this side of the House, as government, we continue to invest. We have increased funding by 51% since 2003 for community service groups to help victims of domestic violence.

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I just want to reiterate that we strongly feel that the PC proposal is a good start. It is, however, limited in being a select committee with a narrow mandate. We feel more can be done to build on that proposal, and I think the member who introduced the opposition motion seemed very open to that. So that's fantastic. I think that's great. Because it shouldn't be a political exercise. I think everyone knows in this House that we need to get it right. If we're going to make this kind of investment, we have to get the right scope and mandate nailed down.

I talked earlier about the standing orders. They're very clear about the composition of committees. This is an issue that's important to all of us. It's a societal issue. I

think we can all work very collaboratively across our party lines to get this right.

I'm hopeful that the House leaders will get together, that they will come to an understanding on how we should proceed. I very much look forward to being a part of this process going forward, and I thank the member for bringing the motion forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to join with my caucus colleagues and with others in this House, like the NDP caucus, in offering my unequivocal support for the motion brought forward by my friend and colleague the honourable member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Laurie Scott.

Sexual harassment has hurt Ontarians from all parts of our province. Every member of this House understands sexual harassment can never be tolerated. As Ontarians, it violates our fundamental values. Fortunately our culture is at a turning point, so we cannot let today's important work be tarnished by partisanship and be lost in defeat. This House must be united in its commitment to support the victims of sexual harassment and make our province a safer place to live, work and succeed.

The opposition day motion before the House is an opportunity to catalyze change. It's an opportunity to build a safer, more equitable work environment for current and future generations. The opposition day motion calls for the creation of a select committee. It's a reasonable and responsible way to have an all-party, non-partisan select committee to study sexual harassment, hear directly from the victims and bring forward a plan of action to address it. The committee would be empowered with the authority to conduct province-wide hearings, undertake research and have the appropriate authority to develop recommendations.

I disagree with the premise in the Premier's letter that our motion is too narrow. Like all select committees that have preceded it, this select committee would be free to set its own course and its own goals. In the past, motions calling for a select committee did not detail, to the letter, who the witnesses would be, where the committee would travel and which experts would be consulted. It has always been understood by members in this House that these details are left to the committee to determine. It goes without saying that this select committee would hear from a broad range of Ontarians, including young people, aboriginal women, visible minorities and members of LGBTQ communities. Put simply, a select committee would allow us to take the politics out of combatting sexual harassment.

This is in the best interests of the public and victims. As the PC critic for women's issues has rightly and repeatedly said, the select committee should be equally represented by two members from each party. Again, I thank the leader of the NDP and her caucus for supporting this motion. As each party has important contributions to make to this debate, it's important that we have equal representation on the committee and take the politics out of it.

The Premier says that she appreciates the spirit of non-partisanship in which we have called for this select committee, but her position says somewhat otherwise. This is regrettable. The Premier talks about the need to address inequality and then proposes that the parties' representation on the committee be unequal.

I do not doubt the Premier's sincerity in combatting this issue for Ontarians. I am pleased that the Premier is joining the Ontario PC caucus and NDP call for a robust mandate to combat the challenges before us. An all-party, non-partisan committee can achieve just that.

Today's motion also puts in place firm dates and deliverables so that we can get to work, hear from Ontarians and act on the results. The committee would be established very soon, members would present an interim report to the House by June 2015, and we would all have a final report by October 2015.

I cannot fathom why anyone would oppose today's opposition day motion. It's the right way forward for Ontario. I look forward to rising in the House to vote in favour of the motion, and I hope that all members will join us and do just that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people that I represent in London West to speak to the motion that was introduced today by the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

As our leader stated in her remarks, New Democrats will be supporting this motion. We believe that it provides a mechanism, a needed mechanism, to deal with the shocking incidents that have galvanized media and public attention over the past several months, including:

- incidents of sexual assault on post-secondary campuses;

- charges of sexual assault laid against Jian Ghomeshi, and concerns about sexual harassment of female journalism students who were doing internships at Q;

- sexual assault allegations made against federal MPs;

- a generous severance payment made to an Ontario crown prosecutor accused of sexual harassment;

- revelations that a physician returned to practice after sexually assaulting 13 women and that another 21 Ontario doctors are practising with gender-based restrictions.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre, this list makes it feel like depressingly little has changed. However, given the debate that has been ignited in coffee shops and workplaces across Ontario, it also feels like a breakthrough is finally starting to happen.

In order for it to become more than a feeling, we need to find a way to deal with these issues in a non-partisan manner, in a depoliticized way, in a way that allows for an honest appraisal of government policies and involves MPPs from all parties listening to women and men from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and making recommendations about ending sexual violence and harassment in the workplace.

NDP leader Andrea Horwath spoke about the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Bill 168, that came directly out of the coroner's inquest into the murder of Windsor nurse Lori Dupont. These changes had been proposed five years earlier by NDP leader Andrea Horwath, in 2005 and 2007. When they were finally passed, they were heralded as the changes that were going to make Ontario workplaces free from violence and harassment.

Under Bill 168, the prevention of domestic violence in the workplace became a legislated goal. To ensure that workplaces would be able to meet their obligations under the act, funding was provided for the development of the Make It Our Business initiative at the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, located at Western University in London. This Ontario-wide initiative recognized that most organizations, whether public, private or not-for-profit, do not have in-house expertise for risk assessment and safety planning. Make It Our Business provides a gender-based lens that is critical to understanding violence against women, and a legislative hammer to enable access to all Ontario workplaces.

At the small London firm I was working for at the time, we took advantage of the Make It Our Business workplace training offered for staff and management. My male co-workers were stunned to learn of the prevalence of domestic violence in Ontario and Canada. The program was vitally important to shifting attitudes and raising awareness of the impact of words and actions at work, as well as the warning signs of a co-worker experiencing violence at home.

Unfortunately, however, funding cuts and a change in ministry priorities have undermined the capacity of the program to deliver face-to-face workplace education. Those working at Make It Our Business describe it as another example of an investment made but not fully actualized. The fall newsletter of the provincial network of Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees states, "Again, a lack of commitment to prevention has left the program struggling to build the needed relationships between VAW"—violence against women—"sector and employers."

That is why New Democrats support the motion today. As indicated in the 2013 report of the Auditor General, there's a need to move beyond noncommittal expressions of support, and set clear goals and timelines to address sexual violence and harassment.

Yesterday's announcement of funding for women's shelters is welcome, but there is a need for concrete action on the part of government to embed violence prevention as an all-of-government priority.

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The government's willingness to push this issue aside is evident in the cabinet minister mandate letters that were released this fall. As pointed out by southwestern Ontario Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees, the Ontario Women's Directorate is the only ministry charged with ensuring a gender lens. There is no

mention of a gender lens in any other ministry letter, including that of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which is directly responsible for women's shelters. There is no mention of a gender lens in any of the letters about affordable housing, employment, health services or child care—issues that are critical for women's full and equal participation in Ontario—revealing that women's issues are as marginalized in government as they are in the community.

Before I conclude, I want to say a few words in my role as critic for colleges and universities about sexual assault on post-secondary campuses. As our leader indicated, the statistics are alarming. And yet, despite the prevalence of sexual assault on Ontario campuses, only four out of 20 universities—Lakehead, Guelph, Brock and Western—have created a special policy on sexual assault, and no Ontario college currently has a special policy.

While we know that policy development is now under way, much more needs to be done. Every Ontario post-secondary student has a right to feel safe when they attend post-secondary education in Ontario, and every institution should have a clear policy on how allegations of sexual assault will be dealt with. More than that, a comprehensive review of how incidents of sexual assault are reported, investigated and tracked on Ontario campuses is required in order to identify what improvements need to be made, with specialized training provided to all staff and faculty who are involved in all stages of the process.

As a society, we simply cannot allow this level of sexual assault and sexual harassment to continue. We need real, concrete plans to end sexual assault and harassment against women in the workplace and in our communities.

I congratulate the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing this motion forward and look forward to implementing the recommendations that are made by the all-party select committee. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: One act of violence or sexual harassment against one woman is one act too many. And I think we all agree here in the House: This is an issue that we all take very seriously. Certainly the comments from the members of the opposition have reflected that today. I also understand that this is an issue that has been discussed at the House leaders' meetings.

We also agree with what this motion stands for and we're ready to support it in principle.

We're open to considering what we can collectively do to address this issue moving forward. It's an issue that affects too many people in our society. It's a crime. And crime and the fear of crime affect all of us, men and women, in workplaces and outside workplaces.

I sat on the board as a director at the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council for the last seven years, until I was elected in June. At that table, we had the heads of many organizations, from Waterloo region women's crisis services, from the youth sector, from the education

sector, from the seniors' population, from family and children's services, from all kinds of organizations.

What we were dealing with is the root causes of crime through social development. Raising awareness of crime, whether it be sexual harassment in the workplace or crimes against children or cyber crime, etc., was something that was on our table each and every month. We had all-party support when it came to supporting and bringing awareness of whatever organization issue was brought to our table.

I was proud of the work that the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council did in Waterloo region, because it didn't just address the crime; it addressed the fear of crime. The result is, the fear of crime and crime in Waterloo region have steadily gone down in the last few years.

We also had partnerships with the Waterloo region sexual assault centre, as well as the Waterloo region women's crisis services, all organizations that really dealt with the issue that we're discussing today: sexual harassment, mostly of women.

I also must point out, Mr. Speaker, that as an emergency nurse we were trained to identify victims of sexual assault and victims of sexual harassment, whether that person came in with a mental health issue or somebody that came in with an actual assault and had physical injuries. We were able to identify them through our questioning, but then were able to bring in the experts to be able to help us to treat those victims.

So this is an issue that's very close to my heart. I'd have to say, with the statistics that are out there, with what percentage of women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace—I too, when I started thinking back, I did witness sexual harassment in the workplace as a very young nurse in one of the major downtown hospitals. What did I do about it and what did the victim do about it? Nothing. I do understand that these issues are really difficult to bring forward, and I certainly hope that the work that we do as all parties in the House helps to identify this and assists women, children and men to come forward with issues.

As a government, we will continue to work to make sure that those policies are working. We all have a role to play in ensuring that violence and harassment in Ontario workplaces and our society is simply not tolerated. Everybody in this province, regardless of their gender, should be able to work in a safe and healthy workplace. A comprehensive review is happening of the OPS policies on discrimination and harassment and violence. The kind of training that needs to happen on an annual basis is happening within the OPS, within the broader public service and in our own legislative world. We all need to continue to make sure that all of that is in place.

We also have to look in our own communities and workplaces to make sure that we have the practices and behaviours in place that keep ourselves and our colleagues safe. As I've said before, there are many organizations throughout Ontario that help to identify victims of crime and try and prevent it in their own communities, and we, as all members in the House, need to help support them.

Earlier this week, as you're aware, Premier Wynne wrote to the opposition leaders expressing strong support for a process that would see MPPs travel Ontario and engage directly with women and men to shed light on the important issues of sexual assault and harassment not only in the workplace but as a society. While the PC proposal for a limited select committee with a narrow mandate is a great start, and I offer compliments to the member from Kawartha Lakes–Brock—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I will get that right. Sorry. Haliburton; thank you.

It's a great start, and I commend her for her persistence in bringing this to the House. We do support it in principle, but we also feel that more work needs to be done to improve upon the proposal.

The Premier has challenged us in a couple of ways: (1) to broaden the mandate to include sexual violence and harassment outside the workplace, and (2) to incorporate the voices of those most affected by sexual assault and harassment, such as the voices of young people, aboriginal women, visible minorities and voices from the LGBTQ communities. We need to make sure that we get this right. I think we all agree on that. The House leader also wrote to his counterparts in order to continue this discussion.

Regarding the points made about the select committee make-up, despite the PC and the NDP criticisms, the select committees of this Legislature have reflected the composition of the House. If I take you back in history, former Premier Harris had two select committees, both with a majority of PC members. The Select Committee on Hydro Nuclear Affairs had a composition of five PC members out of eight and the Select Committee on Alternative Fuel Sources had five PC members out of nine.

Under Premier Wynne, the Select Committee on Developmental Services in 2013 had four OLP members out of nine, reflecting the Liberal government's minority status. Further, standing order 113(a) states clearly that the membership of a standing or select committee "shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House."

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Finally, both the PCs and the NDP agreed as recently as July that the committees of the Legislature are to reflect the proportion of the recognized parties in the House, reflecting the will of the people of Ontario.

I'm proud of this government's record. In 2009, our government was the first to bring in changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, to address violence and workplace harassment. It requires employers to have workplace violence and workplace harassment policies and programs to implement them.

Is there more work to do? Absolutely, there is.

I want to again commend the members who have already spoken in the House today about this important issue and look forward to continuing debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a couple of things I would like to cover when discussing this motion.

First of all, thank you, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock member, colleague. It is worthwhile, it is valuable that we are debating this today.

I want to specifically narrow my comments to the value and the difference of a select committee compared to a standing committee. I've heard both members of the Liberal government debate and talk about a limited select committee, and I have to laugh at that, because one of the really unique and, quite frankly, very valuable parts of having a select committee over a standing committee is in fact the broad mandate that allows the committee members who are participating in a select committee to go beyond the narrow focus of what our standing committees ultimately do.

For any members who have participated in a standing committee, you know that it is related directly to the legislation that comes before it and, more importantly, only the sections of the legislation that are being debated. Even if there is another section of legislation that you want to amend, you cannot, because the scope of a standing committee does not allow you to do that.

The beauty and the uniqueness of select committees—I have had the honour, the fortune of participating in two since I was elected in 2007. The first one was the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

It's not a prop, Speaker, because it is actually a document that was generated by a select committee.

We have to stop believing that we have a lock on all the good ideas. One of the benefits of select committees is that they are for systemic issues. Well, as the leader of the third party mentioned, less than 10% of people who are sexually harassed report it. It is a systemic problem. It is not a problem that started with Jian Ghomeshi. What made it unique was that he happened to be a public figure. But it is not unique in terms of timeline. We've been dealing with this since women and men have been working together in the workplace. It is a systemic problem.

The second thing that select committees allow us to do is admit there is no simple solution to this. We have to open our minds and start to figure out why less than 10% are willing to come forward. There are a myriad of reasons, and let's stop assuming that we know all the answers. Is it because the justice system is set up in such a way that people don't want to put themselves through that? Is it because the process for charging is so much against the burden of proof? Is it because the workplace becomes stigmatized? Are people afraid to come forward because they're worried about their career aspirations? Let's get to the nub of the matter and have people who have experience in this issue, who have personally experienced these issues, come forward and give us those suggestions, because, quite frankly, when we open the doors at Queen's Park, when we allow committees to have public hearings, we get some great ideas.

When the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was meeting, we had 32 days of public hearings. We had over 300 presenters. And when I say 32 days, I don't mean an hour, from 9 to 10, on Thursday mornings; I mean 32 days. We travelled across the province. We went into First Nations communities. We went to the north. We went to the south. We went to Ottawa. We went to the southeast. We need to do a better job of opening up our legislation and actually allowing people who know what's going on and who have suggestions to come forward and bring those ideas. What we've seen, quite frankly, without politicizing the issue, since the Liberal majority in June is that we get a day and a half of public hearings. Your House leader is the one who says, "Be satisfied. That's enough." That's not enough for this issue.

The second select committee that most recently prepared a report was of course the Select Committee on Developmental Services: again, 14 days of full public hearings; again, we went to the north, we went to Ottawa, we went to London, we went to Windsor. We need to allow people to participate in this debate. If anything has happened as a result of the Jian Ghomeshi issue, it is that more people are talking about it. More people are saying, "Yes, it needs to be improved. How can we do it?" And as legislators—they're looking to us and saying, "You have an opportunity here. You can do this." You can bring people together, you can open up the doors of Queen's Park and go out and speak to the experts in the field, speak to the individuals who are dealing with this issue—the experts, the professionals—on a daily basis. Speak to the individuals who have lived experience—which I believe is the word we like to use—and actually listen to what they have to say, and the ideas.

I have a family transition place in my riding. They do some excellent work. They work in the schools. They work with men who have been charged. They work with women, of course. What they have told me is, "There is not one solution, Sylvia." There is a whole series of areas, whether it's in the justice system, whether it's in the education system, whether it's in our own ministries, where we can actually make a difference. But unless we open our minds and unless we're willing to hear from those people, we're just going to spin our wheels here. We're not going to move forward at all. We're going to pretend that having a standing committee do two days or four days and then write that report, and then we can put it on the shelf and we can all feel better about ourselves—well, you know what? I don't think we will.

I think what we're doing is a grave disservice. I think if we actually look at this as, "Here's our opportunity to do the right thing"—here's our opportunity to take it out of the standing committees, the partisanship that most of us willingly participate in five days a week, and actually make a difference.

The two standing committees—and I can name members from all three sides who I participated with. We all went in there understanding that we didn't have all the solutions. But we also all went into that select committee wanting desperately to make a difference. Quite frankly,

and I'm going to be biased here, I think both of these reports have some excellent recommendations that have truly made a difference and ultimately will make a difference if we continue to implement the recommendations that were made.

We need to do more of that. When people ask me what I like about being an MPP, what I like about Queen's Park, I cite these two select committees, because you can in-depth study issues and actually, on a consensus basis, come forward with ideas where collectively, regardless of whether we're orange, blue or red, we can say, "Yes, I think that will actually make a difference," and "Yes, I want to do that."

I'm going to wrap up by saying a standing committee is too limited in scope. If you want to use the word "limited," put it in front of a standing committee, because they have the pressure of other pieces of legislation that are sitting in the queue, waiting to be dealt with. There will constantly be pressure from your House leader, saying, "Get on with it. We have other pieces of government legislation that need to be dealt with, so wrap this up." I believe a select committee—and I've seen it in two examples in my short time here. I've seen how select committees can actually delve into issues. We can get deputy ministers to come forward and say, "Why aren't you doing a better job? Attorney General, why did you let that assistant crown attorney go away with a huge severance instead of actually dealing with the problems that were happening at that particular crown office?" We have that ability, and we're not going to have that ability if we have it in standing committee.

1700

So I would just urge people to open up their minds and actually look at some of the work that has been happening in other select committees. You don't have to pick these two. I'm obviously biased because I participated in these ones. But they don't have to be this one.

The point is, there is a difference between a select committee and a standing committee. The difference is that we go in there with the assumption that we're trying to make a change and we want to work together. Let's be honest: When consensus reports come forward, they have stronger weight behind them. If we get into a situation where there has to be a minority report that's written by the NDP caucus and then there's a minority report written by the PC caucus because the Liberals have a majority, it does nothing. We have accomplished zero.

So I really think that if you looked at what standing committees historically have been able to accomplish in this chamber, you would understand that the reason we want a select committee is that there is a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to applaud the member from Dufferin-Caledon. I really listened intently to her argument and to some of the points that she put forward, and I truly appreciate the wisdom that was in her deliberation.

I hope to provide a little bit of my own personal insight. Of course, I'm honoured to speak as the representative of my riding, as a member of provincial Parliament, as we all are, but maybe more so as a man and as a father of two young children, a boy and a girl, and one who has come to a level of awareness about sexual assault and sexual abuse in our communities, prior to being elected, and the responsibility that I have as a man and as a father and as a community leader to stand tall, to be strong and to stand with those who have been victimized by sexual abuse and sexual assault.

I learned that from listening and from participating. I was fortunate enough, prior to being elected, to sit on the board of directors for the Sexual Assault Crisis Centre of Windsor. I want to give them a shout-out and the work that they do each and every day to provide crisis intervention services, support, counselling, public education, advocacy and prevention. They do tremendous work in our community, all along being targets of reduced budget by the various ministries that fund them. They continue to reach out and to provide those wonderful services. It's really where I learned how vital it is for us to stand together, to put those resources forward, to not only support those who have been victimized but to play our own role in ending violence against women, men, children and all those who have ever been victimized.

That's why I stand here in support of the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's motion. I think it is indeed not only timely but something that we can all actually progress. I think it is actually a balanced approach that would lend itself to eliminating the partisanship that is so prevalent in this House at all times. I think it's also an opportunity for the government to send a signal that we're going to treat this differently. This one we're going to separate from the politics of this chamber. This one we're actually going to put all of our resources and all of our hearts and our efforts and our emotions into finding a balanced road forward.

In doing that, at the basis of the member's motion in striking a select committee is the call to have balanced representation on that committee. And I'll tell you why I think it's important: because the current makeup—or the proposed makeup, if it was to be simply put into a standing committee—would mean that, as New Democrats, our caucus would only have one representative. That would mean that that committee would only get the perspective of either a woman or a man. I think it's important to have a balanced approach. I think it's important for us as a caucus, and myself or any other of my colleagues, to show to our daughters, to show to our sisters and our mothers, that men will and have to stand up to fight sexual abuse, sexual assault. We have to lend our voice to this debate. We have to be leaders and champions.

I try to do that in my most important job: as a father. We have very, very clear discussions with my kids. They're very young, but I try my best to teach them, to tell them and to show them that men have to play an important role in informing other men about what is adequate, what is respectful and what is against the law,

ultimately—what you can and cannot do. We have frank discussions. My kids are aware. They're informed, and they can also act as advocates.

Give me that opportunity. Give yourselves that opportunity. Take the partisanship out of this, and ensure that all voices are heard. Make this mandate something that is depoliticized and that sends a strong message to all those who have been victimized that we're taking it seriously and we're taking a different approach. It actually warrants that, maybe more so than any other effort on behalf of this Legislature.

Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to join in the debate. I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's a great pleasure to follow my friend from Essex and endorse what he said, because I thought that was a very thoughtful and mature intervention, and I appreciate his words. And I want to thank the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for introducing this motion. I think it's a very important step forward.

It's an odd world we live in. When I was reading through it, I recognized the horrors that are visited upon particularly women from both sexual harassment in the workplace and violence against women, which often occurs in the home. The world can be a very unsafe and scary place.

I think sometimes we have to do more than simply have workplaces that are free of overt violence or harassment. I think that we should try to achieve something higher than that.

I remember when I was in my 20s, working in a large federal institution. It became known I was gay, and my particular boss at that time was not that cool with the idea. I was a middle manager, and I remember getting pulled out of my office and put in the secretarial pool. I was the only man who worked there. The secretarial pool was mostly women, which made it a little bit more interesting because they were a little bit more emotionally coherent than some of my male supervisory colleagues, and much more fun to hang out with.

That was followed up by a phone call to my landlord, who, though I was out, felt some need to point out that the person I was living with was not my roommate but my partner at the time. Shortly thereafter, I lost my apartment, which is really unpleasant, to lose your apartment in Ottawa in early January.

That felt like a lot of harassment; do you know what I mean? It didn't make that workplace a place I wanted to be in. As a matter of fact, I have to credit that particular supervisor with my political success, because as a result of that, someone else in senior management got me sent out to Winnipeg from Ottawa to save me from what was a really unpleasant person, someone who had such issues with someone being gay.

I cannot put myself in a woman's body. I don't understand what that's like. Women visually present often as

women, and they deal with a whole bunch of crap that a lot of us guys don't have to deal with. It shouldn't be lost on any of us, and I have huge respect for the leader of the third party, because to be a woman in a leadership role isn't that easy, and there are not that many of them. It's not lost on us that for about 200 years we've been electing Premiers and heads of executive councils, and it only took us two centuries to put a woman in the job. Dare I say, in the last 200 years there are a lot of women who probably could have fit that role as well as many men did, and they didn't.

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If people don't believe that we live in an inherently sexist society, even if we're not saying overtly sexist things, the simple exclusion of women and their non-participation—I dropped out of a leadership race to support a woman. I said at the time and I've said it many times: The problem in our society isn't that there aren't many brilliant women prepared to lead; there's just not enough reasonably good guys prepared to follow. We have to not crowd out all the space all the time. I think many of our parties are starting to learn that. I think the member who's introduced the motion is showing that kind of leadership, and I commend her for that.

We're living in a really complicated world, because I'm hoping that one of the things that will come out of this beyond sexual harassment, as real and as pernicious a problem as that is, is that this committee will help us find ways to create respectful workplaces—

Interruption.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —not just tolerate human difference or be afraid of it, but we actually celebrate it.

I always say to my staff that if I don't hear some laughter down the hall on regular points during the day, I feel like things aren't really good. Most of my staff are pretty amazing, and they're very diverse. I have Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jewish—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay, thank you very much. I'll give that away before someone else grabs it.

But, you know, I like to hear laughter. I have a young Muslim woman who works with me who doesn't shake hands. I have a very gregarious Irish guy who is out from Ireland, who's an environmental lawyer and has a personality big enough to fill the Rogers stadium. Getting to a place where all of us, from all of our cultural differences, actually come together and feel respected and safe isn't easy.

I think if I ever understood the need for a harassment-free workplace, one that actually celebrates diversity and that's a respectful workplace—which is I think what we're trying to achieve here, really a place where people feel celebrated and uplifted; our jobs are exciting, and we have this huge privilege in this place to try and make a difference in the world before we die—was when I had a member of my staff who was deaf. My God, that was difficult. Some 80% of deaf people are unemployed—80%—and they're the most educated minority. So if you think of discrimination or that—they can't even get into the workplace to do that.

But the adjustment was really interesting for me, because first of all, deafness, as we all understand, is not a disability; it's a different culture with its own language. It's a remarkable thing, and a lot of people don't understand that. But what he taught us is that we all learned how to communicate better. He actually gave the rest of us ability through his difference, because we all learned how to sign, how to read each other's eyes and mouth and body language. My God, I became very conscious of my body language. I'm a very expressive kind of person, and when I'm not in a good mood I should never play a poker game, because people read things off you. It can be stressful if your boss walks in and his or her body language is a little unpleasant. That creates stress for workers.

As we learned to communicate, what he did is he transformed my entire team and enabled them in non-verbal communication, because he couldn't hear us directly. We really became much more sensitive. If we can actually not be afraid of each other's differences, those differences can be pathways to being a better person, a more skilled person.

This horrible thing—because, really, people's disability, when we call people disabled, is really our disability. It's actually that when we build relationships with them that they give us ability as a reward for being respectful of them. We become better people; we become better, skilled people. It's an incredibly humbling experience.

I think women—I mean, my mother was a secretary who basically was a vice-president because she did her boss' job for her. When she took over my dad's company, she ran it brilliantly. But my mother had in her entire life learned how to manage men's egos, their titles and their salaries at four times hers, to actually get enough satisfaction out of her work that she never got credit for all of the success. I would dare say that probably for many, many decades women have built capacity in companies by getting no credit for it and managing the egos of my gender. As a male with a rather large ego, I apologize to all of you right now and hope I'm not going to that warm place for it.

But for gay, lesbian and transgendered people—I want to just talk about that because that's an interesting issue. When I was the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I always thought, “God, it's 2014. I've been out of the closet since I was 14”—I won't tell you what decade that was, but mullets and disco were still around back then. There was a study done by the Ontario undergraduate students' association—I think some of the members opposite, the member for London—Fanshawe, mentioned this previously, and I appreciated her raising this—that half of all of our university and college students don't feel safe being out and self-identifying as gay and lesbian people, in our schools and our universities, in 2014, in our most educated workplaces. You can think about what it's like for the rest of the world.

I have an event I do, which you're all invited to. It's a completely non-partisan event called the Idea Distillery. We do it at Signs, which is a social enterprise run by deaf people just over at the corner of Yonge and Wellesley. Last night, we had Helen Kennedy and a group of women

talking about transitioning families. One of the moms was there, and some of my transgender constituents were there. She has a daughter who is a trans young woman. Obviously at the age she is, she hasn't gone through any surgical procedure, but has decided that pre-puberty, or into puberty. She was asking, how does she find a respectful place for her daughter as she goes through her teenage years?

We have a very binary idea of sexuality. If you're straight, it's a boy-girl thing, and if you're gay, it's a boy-boy or girl-girl thing, but there's a lot of complexity. We're now seeing more and more transgender people show up at work. The members for Parkdale-High Park, who I had the great pleasure of working with, Ottawa Centre and Whitby-Oshawa all worked very hard to bring forward legislation that actually creates—right now, that's just words in law. Transgender people can't get their driver's licence changed. They can't get X or M or F. They don't have that kind of choice. It's very hard.

If you're a transgender 12-year-old, do you go to parents if they're evangelical Christians in Hamburg or social Conservatives in Rosedale? Most of the kids, when I worked on the street, the violence that was done to them was done to them in the home and by the people who were supposed to love and protect them who couldn't accept the difference, never mind celebrate it.

I think we have a lot of work to do because harassment sexually is about more than the binary nature of being a boy or a girl. It's much more complicated, and as we go forward in this world, we're going to deal with more complexity: racially, culturally, based on faith.

I give huge credit to the member. I would ask the committee to try and look deeply into the issue of sexual harassment, but really look at the complexity so that we move from tolerating differences to actually celebrating it and celebrating the diversity of humanity.

I want to say one thing. I get hugged around here a lot, by even members of the opposition. I've even been kissed by some of my straight male colleagues. I think that one of the things I hope we never lose is that, coming from a big huggy, Ukrainian family. I think harassment is when someone says no and you don't want it. But I hope it never comes to the point where any of you who will hug or kiss me ever feel restrained, because it's sometimes the most humanizing thing. I hope we never translate that human affection is the same thing as harassment. That has a lot to do with permission and respect. Otherwise, all of us of Ukrainian and Italian and a few other cultural backgrounds will have to lock ourselves in the washroom during meetings or something.

Anyway, thank you very much, and God bless.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm very proud to be in the House today and to speak to the opposition day motion that has been advanced by my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. This is an important subject and one that I view as being an injustice that is happening throughout our land that has been long neglected. It's time for this Legislature and us as lawmakers to recog-

nize that there are things that are wrong in our laws and to take the appropriate action after careful deliberations and considerations to rectify those things that are wrong in our laws in Ontario.

I think it's obvious, but I just want to state it for emphasis: This motion is about sexual harassment of women, but that affects all of us—not only in this Legislature but everybody, completely. I'm a son of a mother. I'm a brother to sisters. I am a husband to a loving wife. I'm a father to a loving daughter. Sexual harassment against women affects us all. If it affects those we love, it affects ourselves.

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I really want to say that this opposition day motion needs to be advanced, a committee needs to be struck, and it cannot be politicized. It needs to be done on thoughtful, considerate, non-partisan lines if it is to be effective and to right the wrongs that are happening with our laws.

I just want to state for the record a couple of facts. These are facts from the Toronto Police Service. It says, "Sexual assault is a vastly underreported crime. According to Statistics Canada, only 6% of all sexual assaults are reported to police." We saw that very recently, a high-profile case, where people who were victims did not feel comfortable going to our authorities or going to our police officers. They felt greater security in going to the media than they did from going to our law enforcement officers.

"In one study, women gave the following reasons for not reporting incidents of sexual assault:

"—belief that the police could do nothing about it," which was 50%;

"—concern about the attitude of both police and the courts towards sexual assault," and 44% gave that.

Here's another one: fear and shame—64% of women did not report those incidents of sexual assault for fear and shame.

All the victimization surveys show that less than 10% of women who are sexually assaulted ever report the incident to our police. That should give everybody in this Legislature a significant eye-opener. Can we imagine any other crime committed in this province where only 10% of the people felt comfortable enough to go to our law enforcement and go to the courts to find and seek out remedies for that crime? I can't imagine any other crime, and I would challenge anybody to even consider, is there any other such crime? What would we do in this Legislature if only 10% of people felt comfortable to report a stolen car, or only 10% of people felt comfortable to report a break-in? We would have a society of lawlessness. I think, Speaker, and to this House, that is a problem that needs to be fundamentally rectified.

There's a story on the Internet; it's a letter to the police chief in Toronto, Bill Blair. I'm not sure if anybody else in the House has read this, but it was written on Friday, November 14, by Liz Millican. It's a thoughtful letter where she speaks of her experience with sexual assault.

Here's one sentence: When she went to the authorities, "they told me that I should not report it and that no good would come of it." Even the victim support organizations discouraged reporting. "We are told reporting is more traumatizing" than the actual rape. She goes on to say, "The law requires an assumption of innocence for the accused," which we all agree with; it's a long-standing tenet. But, she adds, we don't have that assumption of innocence for the victim.

There's much that needs to be done. This select committee is a way for us to approach this problem in a non-politicized fashion, in a non-partisan fashion. It is a way that we can advance and protect and change the laws to protect those that we love, by doing our jobs here as legislators and by doing our job on a select committee in a non-partisan fashion.

With that, I want to thank you all for taking the time to listen, and I do hope that this select committee is struck, with equal representation, by all parties quickly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London-Fanshawe to add my thoughts on the motion to create a select committee on workplace sexual harassment.

My party has always been committed to preventing sexual harassment and violence against women. Whether it was my NDP colleague from Parkdale-High Park, who attempted to introduce this very same motion back in 2008 and again in 2010, or our leader, Andrea Horwath, who tabled a bill back in 2007 to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment and violence in the workplace, my party has been advocating for women's rights for some time.

We only need to look at recent headlines to see how we are failing women in this province and, quite frankly, around the world. From Jian Ghomeshi to our federal counterparts, we see that sexual harassment and violence against women is rampant, and there are few outcomes where women feel supported and compelled to come forward without fear of reprisal and repercussion.

As the Auditor General pointed out last year, we need to move beyond noncommittal aspirations and set clear goals and timelines to address sexual violence and harassment. Our progress must be measurable, not anecdotal. So let's talk about the major critiques from the AG.

The government doesn't know how effective its programs are because they haven't set measurable goals or targets. The government doesn't know how badly these programs are needed, or how many women are being turned away and for what reason. The government does not know what the quality of the services provided by the funded agencies is, since there is little monitoring or service standards to speak of.

Back in 2009, there were more than 500 safety and security issues at VAW shelters. This government doesn't know how many of those issues were ever addressed. What we do know is that only 7% of urgent issues received government funding, and only 10% of the safety and security upgrades received funding. What's

worse is that our federal government seems to also be playing the lip service game with women. Their most recent comprehensive survey data measuring the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment in Canada dates back to 1993. This is a record we should all be appalled by.

First and foremost, we need to recognize that ending violence against women and girls will only come about in a wider context of equality and social justice. Equal income and employment opportunities allow women to renegotiate the personal and social power relationships that perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence.

I genuinely believe that we need greater investment in the economic empowerment of women. All forms of gender-based violence, whether in the home or workplace, are linked to women's lack of economic autonomy. Ending sexual and gender-based violence—and the impunity that allows it to continue—are among the top priorities for the NDP. We have put our money where our mouth is, and as a party we are committed to seeking out women candidates, and I am proud to be part of a caucus with more than 50% women members.

We must also take seriously our efforts to prevent gender-based violence from happening in the first place. We need to look beyond the workplace to include sexual violence and harassment wherever it occurs. The committee should also reach out to vulnerable communities whose voices are often not heard. Our country has a very serious problem in our approach towards women but none as serious as our lack of efforts towards aboriginal women. It was only yesterday that this government announced, "Ontario is protecting women from violence with investments that support front-line services and help aboriginal women facing abuse," yet according to Amnesty International, "Indigenous women are going missing and being murdered at a much higher rate than other women in Canada—a rate so high it constitutes nothing less than a national human crisis."

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This is on the heels of the recent RCMP report that states that there were 1,181 cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women between 1980 and 2012 in Canada. They account for 16% of female homicides and 11.3% of all cases of missing women in Canada. This means that aboriginal women are approximately five times more likely to be murdered than non-aboriginal women and girls. This begs the question, how seriously are we addressing violence against women?

We must make sure that prevention efforts start early by raising girls and boys based on values of non-violence and mutual respect. This requires investments in key aspects of gender equality. This requires investments in education, especially secondary education. These kinds of investments have huge payoffs not only for girls but for our communities and our country. This is probably the best shot we have against gender discrimination and violence, and for reducing poverty and fostering overall economic growth.

We believe that tackling challenges effectively requires multi-faceted and comprehensive strategies.

I hope all members will support this motion for a select committee so that we can do the right thing today and take the politics out of this topic of sexual harassment, which is obviously very important to each and every member in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate. I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Good afternoon, Speaker, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

I want to thank members from all parties for participating in this debate as it relates to the opposition day motion.

Speaker, this is a very serious issue that we are discussing in this Legislature. Issues around sexual harassment, issues around sexual violence, predominantly towards women, in our society are issues that are extremely serious; issues that we not only as legislators but all members of the broader community should be very concerned about.

Day after day, we hear stories about women, in particular, who are either harassed or have faced some sort of sexual violence. That is unacceptable. I think it impacts us all.

With the heightened scrutiny on this issue for the last few weeks, since we've all been talking about this issue, I've had the opportunity to ask a lot of the women around me the question, "Have you ever been sexually harassed?" I have to say, Speaker, I was quite shocked by the answer. Every single one of them looked at me and kind of smiled or laughed and said, "Are you serious, asking that question? The answer is yes." It really shocked me. It's really hard to believe—we hear the data; we read the statistics—for me to know, in the very informed environment that we live and operate in, that these very intelligent women who are part of my life, be it personal or at work, have faced that.

Clearly, this is an issue of huge importance that we need to deal with. It's an issue, Speaker, that I would argue is not just limited to workplaces, be it here at Queen's Park or the broader Ontario public service, but it's an issue of a societal nature. I have two universities and two colleges in my community in Ottawa, and that issue around sexual violence and sexual harassment comes often in the context of a campus. I often hear from young people who talk about young women facing challenges. The debate on this issue, I would argue, is far broader than workplaces. We need to have a conversation that talks about the society we live in and the culture that we have around us.

We have made great strides. More needs to be done, and that's why I was really glad that on Monday the Premier wrote to all party leaders and to the MPP from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock to address the proposal that we are debating today. I, in turn, then wrote to the other House leaders. In the letter, the Premier expressed support for a process that would see MPPs travel and engage directly with Ontarians on sexual violence and harassment. The committee's work should culminate in a report that reflects victims' experiences

and should make recommendations about how to shift social norms and behaviours into proposed reforms to support structures and institutions.

The Premier also challenged us to broaden the mandate to include sexual violence and harassment outside the workplace, as I was alluding to earlier, and incorporate the voices of the most affected by sexual assault and harassment; specifically young people, aboriginal women, visible minorities and those from the LGBTQ community. I think it is extremely important that we hear directly from those who can draw upon their own experience and expertise and provide real insight for us to better understand this very important issue. Only then can members make informed decisions towards reform.

I also commend the Premier for aiming to broaden the discussion outside the workplace—I feel very strongly about this point—and for wanting to look at this issue on a broader societal scale. Whether it's at work, at home or in the community, women in Ontario have the right to feel safe. We must remain vigilant at all times when it comes to addressing sexual harassment and violence. That's why I'm very glad that we are moving forward with this process, and I look forward to a constructive, positive discussion with other House leaders to make this committee happen.

I believe it is also important to put on record some of the more procedural items in relation to this matter. Recently, members from the opposition parties have made comments on the set-up of the committee. Even after the Premier agreed to this process, we heard accusations that were totally out of sync.

First off, let me be clear: No decision has been made on whether this will be part of a standing committee or a select committee. In my letter to the other House leaders, I said that "a committee best suited to conduct this work could be a standing committee." This is something that will be discussed and eventually decided between the House leaders. We all want to make sure that whatever method we decide on will be the best and most suitable for the committee members themselves, the presenters to the committee, and the eventual report and recommendations that come out of it. We all have to wait until that discussion happens between the House leaders.

We also heard from the opposition about the makeup of the committee. I will say to you, let's not play politics with this issue. Let's play by the rules that are outlined in the standing orders. If you follow the precedent, Speaker, it is clear that committee membership shall mirror the makeup of the Legislature. Standing order 113(a) clearly states that the membership of a standing or select committee "shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House." That is what the rule says, and that is the rule being followed in the committee structure right now in the Legislature. Last July, all three parties agreed to the membership of all committees. So what the opposition is proposing is a change from the standing orders and the agreed-upon norm.

Let's examine some recent select committees. For example, under former Premier Mike Harris, two select committees—both had a majority of PC members. The

Select Committee on Hydro Nuclear Affairs had five PC members out of eight. The Select Committee on Alternative Fuel Sources had five PC members out of nine. Under Premier McGuinty, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions had six Liberal members out of nine. Under the minority Premier Wynne government, we had a committee on developmental services—four Liberal members out of nine.

Let's follow the precedent, work forward on a very important issue and get the work going.

1740
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, I want to speak in support of this motion. I want to make two points, and I'm going to deal with the procedural side, as House leader for the third party. I think my leader and my caucus members laid out well what our position is on this.

Government members have been getting up and saying that there's a precedent, somehow, that things have to be done under a standing committee. Let's be real. Select committees have been used by this Legislature time and time again when there's an issue that is so important or an issue that demands specific attention, to have a focus so that we're able to work non-partisanly on an issue, so that that committee can come back with its report and recommend to the Legislature and eventually to the government what needs to be done. So the whole process of having this kind of item go to a select committee is well within the precedent of the House. It has been done a number of times, and members of the House have commented on what some of those select committees have done.

I heard a little ray of hope in the words of the government House leader, because he said, "My letter said it may be a standing committee," which says maybe he's still open to a select committee. I hope that is the case because, quite frankly, we need to take the partisanship out of this. That's the point that my leader, Andrea Horwath, made on this whole issue.

The Premier opened the door by sending a letter that actually offered some hope, we thought, and then the letter we got from you, as the House leader, was sort of closing the door and making it fairly partisan. I think the way to get around this is to make sure that we all agree that it should be a select committee.

The second thing: composition of the committee. There are all kinds of precedents in this House where the Legislature has voted to create a select committee that has had a composition that is different than that of our standing committees. In fact, our standing orders do call for it. They're also called special committees. Special committees could be committees of one member from each caucus, three members from each caucus—two, three and one. Whatever your composition is, there's precedent in our standing orders to have standing com-

mittees of the Legislature, which we all understand; select committees, which is being requested by the member; or a special committee. In the standing orders, under "special committee," it also says that essentially whatever the number you decide it is is what it's going to be. So there is a precedent within our standing orders and, more importantly, there is precedent within the practice of this Legislature that select committees tend to be—there have been a number of cases—different compositions than what we have seen in our standing committees.

Again, why a select committee? I think members have spoken to this very well today, and that is, this is an issue that shouldn't have partisan politics attached to it. The issue is a serious one that we need to take some action on now. Trying to throw this into a committee where the government is controlling it is, at the very least, going to give the appearance—and I think it will be the practice—that the government is going to try to edge with its majority whatever it is that they want to get done, and that might be trying to protect their own record when it comes to this particular issue. Let's be real.

The point is, we have all kinds of examples where select committees have been formed, have done great work; where the three party leaders got up after those select committees did their reports and said, "What great work. This is how we should do things in this Legislature." We were able to deal with mental health in the committee on mental health—various select committees that we've done in order to look at very, very specific issues, and we have all gotten behind the reports and said, "You know what? These people did good work." The key was, they were non-partisan committees.

So I ask the government across the way to not only support this motion that we're going to support as New Democrats today, but support the unanimous consent motion to allow that select committee to be struck so we can start this very important work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Scott has moved opposition day motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock on a point of order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion with respect to a select committee on sexual harassment in the workplace.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is there unanimous consent in the House? I hear a no.

This afternoon's business being completed, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1746.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

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Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Iles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Sudbury	

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Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
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Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
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Soo Wong
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Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
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Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadi
Todd Smith
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
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